Evolution of political and religious structures in early state level societies| Ideology in archaeological method and theory

Timothy B. Hughes
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The Evolution of Political and Religious Structures in Early State Level Societies:

Ideology in Archaeological Method and Theory

by

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B.A., University of Evansville—Evansville, 1989

B.A., University of Montana—Missoula, 1993

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Identifying the role of ideology has long implied a methodological problem in archaeology. In order to better incorporate ideology in archaeological analysis, this work will 1) establish and illustrate the importance of ideology within a civilization and, as such, in the analysis of the material record created by those civilizations; 2) determine the appropriate level at which ideology operates within a civilization and culture, so that it can be incorporated at a corresponding level of theory and analysis; 3) develop and qualitatively evaluate a methodology for including ideology in archaeological theory and analysis. Through the examination and analysis of monumental architecture and the written record this work will illustrate and examine the role of ideology in culture and cultural evolution through the indirect indicators of institutional interrelationships.
# Table of Contents

## Abstract

**List of Illustrations** iv

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Current Attempts to Include Ideology 9
Methodology of Ideology 11
Theoretical Base 15
Methodology 27
Overview of The Data 30

## Chapter 2: Mesopotamia

Mesopotamian Political Structures 34
Mesopotamian Religious Structures 35
The Mesopotamian Written Record 36
Mesopotamian Monumental Architecture 47
Ur 49
Uruk 54
Babylon 56
Nineveh 58
Mesopotamian Summary 62

## Chapter 3: Mesoamerica

Mesoamerican Political Structures 71
Mesoamerican Religious Structures 76
The Mesoamerican Written Record 79
Mesoamerican Monumental Architecture 89
Tikal 93
Palenque 98
Copán 101
Chichen Itzá 106
Mesoamerican Summary 109

## Chapter 4: Summary and Conclusions

Ideology and Cultural Evolution 119

## Bibliography

127
**List Of Illustrations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustration</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Area Map of Mesopotamia</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Chronology of Events in Mesopotamia</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Site Map of Ur</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sacred Precinct of Ur</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Site Map of Uruk</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Site Map of Babylon</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Reconstruction of the Ishtar Gate</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 City Plan of Nineveh</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Chronology of Events in Mesoamerica</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Area Map of Mesoamerica</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Maya Political Organization and Site Spacing</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Site Map of Tikal</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Tikal Site Chronology</td>
<td>95-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Superimposed Structures of the North Acropolis</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Site Map of Palenque</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Palenque Site Chronology</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Site Map of Copan</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Principal Group of Ruins at Copan</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Copan Site Chronology</td>
<td>104-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Chichen Itza Site Chronology</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Site Map of Chichen Itza</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: Introduction

The role of ideology in human societies has increasingly become the focus of anthropological debate, especially in archaeology. Although most archaeologists would concede the fact that ideology may be an important component of cultural evolution or change, many contend that, because ideas and perceptions are impossible to excavate, material remains must limit the scope of investigation to those aspects directly associated with formal characteristics and those that can currently be quantified. The mainstream paradigm, and its associated methods, provides no readily visible means of incorporating the concept of ideology into archaeological analysis. If archaeology is to continue to study change in societies as a whole, then it must also acknowledge, and include, the ideological component in ways which can be clearly stated, codified, and refined. Without including ideology at a more appropriate level of theory and explanation, any analysis will remain incomplete and severely distorted.

The study of the ideology of ancient cultures is at best difficult, but it has the potential to illuminate aspects of the human condition that have intrigued us through countless centuries. Whether these ideas have been expressed as religious beliefs, philosophical inquiries, or canonical law, each expression represents an attempt to provide understandable answers to the most fundamental questions. Regardless of the logical-positivist rational which disregards these types of questions in favor of what can be known through deduction, the questions, and the search for their answers, have remained through the centuries as paradigms have come and gone. Anthropological theory and
archaeological data can help us, in the present, reconstruct the perspectives of cultures long vanished, and perhaps provide a better understanding of how we, as a culture, continue to struggle with these same types of problems.

There is an enormous body of literature which deals with the question of why civilization is advantageous for a group, but very few works address how populations are motivated, regulated, and retain cohesion as a group. Regardless of the necessities of organization, which surround agriculture and irrigation, the importance of a common perspective within a group cannot be overstated. In order for the institutions, which provide the basis for the complex organization needed for a civilization to emerge and remain, to effectively regulate behavior within a group there must be a perceptual commonality. Without a common set of expectations and perception of reality, the basis of communication and understanding necessary for the institutionalization of certain aspects of human activity cannot take place. This commonality has been expressed in many different ways in anthropological literature, but perhaps the most illustrative, for our purposes, was offered by Linda Schele and David Freidel (1990):

As we grow to adulthood, every human being acquires a special way of seeing and understanding the world and the human community. This is a shared conception of reality, created by the members of a society living together over generations, through their language, their institutions and arts, their experiences, and their common work and play. We call this human phenomenon “culture,” and it enables people to understand how and why the world around them works.

The idea that there are as many “realities” as there are societies may be novel to many of us. Yet whether or not we are aware that we see our world through a filter, our own version of reality guides our actions just as surely as other, different versions have guided other societies around the world in both the present and the past...The principal language of our reality here in the west is economics. Important issues in our lives, such as progress and social justice, war and peace, and the hope for prosperity and security, are expressed in material metaphors (Schele and Freidel 1990: 64-5).
This commonality, which is necessary for the formation of a culture, at the most fundamental level, must also be present in greater degree for civilization to emerge. Civilizations require the individual to refrain from certain actions which are unacceptable to the groups functioning or the group as a whole. More important than the specific activities that are considered by the group as unacceptable is the system of beliefs and rationalizations that serve to motivate or discourage the group members. It is also important to understand how these commonly held expectations and perceptions of reality are used by, and effect the behavior of, the regulating body of the group on a practical level.

Rather than attempting to analyze the specific nature of the religious or metaphysical elements of societies, the arguments presented here will attempt to show that shared metaphysical rationalizations, as expressed through religion, political organization, and the material remains that reflect the two, are a necessary component of organization, regulation, motivation of individuals, and culture change. The shared metaphysical rationalizations embodied by a group's commonly held religious beliefs provide members with explanations for aspects of reality that can be categorized as the unknowable, the unknown, and the known. The distinctions that we, in twentieth century western culture, make between the religious and political aspects of our societies impose assumptions on the ancient cultures we study that are not valid or relevant to the metaphysical systems upon which they were founded. Each cultural tradition codifies their assumptions about, and rationalizations for understanding, the model of reality they subscribe to in different ways. The Maya, for example, had no concept of science as we know it, and the model
they used to categorize or make sense of their “reality” was radically different from ours.

The Maya model of reality was not represented as a scientific paradigm or economic theory but was codified into a religious ideology that was expressed through ritual and belief. The all-encompassing nature of the Maya religious system has been aptly characterized by Schele and Freidel as incorporating what we in contemporary society term the material and spiritual into a single integrated system:

The Maya codified their shared model of reality through religion and ritual rather than economics. The language of Maya religion explained the place of human beings in nature, the workings of the sacred world, and the mysteries of life and death, just as our religion still does for us in special circumstances like marriage and funerals. But their religious system also encompassed practical matters of political and economic power, such as how the ordered world of the community worked.

While we live in a model of the world that vests our definitions of physical reality in science and spiritual reality in religious principles, the Maya lived in a world that defined the physical world as the material manifestation of the spiritual and the spiritual as the essence of the material. For them the world of experience manifested itself in two complementary dimensions. One dimension was the world in which they lived out their lives and the other was the abode of the gods, ancestors, and other supernatural beings (Schele and Freidel 1990: 65).

Examples of political connections to the religious structure can be found in each of the early civilizations for which we have relevant data. Although there is variation in the expression, each early civilization’s governing institution was directly connected to, and interdependent on, the religious institutions. This suggests, analogous to the Maya example, that the ideologies, as the term is conventionally used, of these civilizations were not demarcated as separate from their respective religions, but that religious beliefs were an integral part of ideology.

However, that is not intended to suggest that ideology is the sole determinant of culture change, only that it defines the dynamic framework within which change takes
place. It is extremely useful for analysis of archaeological data to consider how specific aspects within a society contributed to cultural change, but how those separate aspects related to the groups ideological construct also needs to be considered if we are to gain a better understanding of those societies as a whole. Because ideology delimits the ways in which individuals within a culture can conceive of doing things (Schele and Freidel 1990: 64), an understanding of a group's ideology can provide archaeologists with more constructive frameworks with which to analyze data.

In the preceding paragraphs, the terms 'ideology,' 'religion,' 'political structure,' and 'civilization' have been used rather freely and without adequate discussion of how those terms are being used here. Although some definition of these terms is necessary, overly specific demarcation can result in distortion of the interlocking and often overlapping categories that are constructed to, ultimately, represent phenomenon in our reality. Therefore, mindful of the risks of being to vague, it seems appropriate to offer definitions of these terms which are only precise enough to remain meaningful; and as there are quite enough definitions for these concepts already available, the definitions offered here will not be original.

In order to avoid confusion concerning the concept of ideology, of which there are many different types in use today (political ideology, religious ideology, philosophical ideology, etc.), the term 'ideology' should be understood throughout this work to refer to religious ideology. Following Conrad and Demarest (1984: 4), religious ideology includes:
...not only formal religion, but also the various metaphysical beliefs, values, and behaviors that lie outside of the guidance of formalized religious institutions or dogmas. In this sense an ideology is a set of interrelated ideas that provides the members of a group with a rational for their existence. It tells the members who they are and explains their relation to one another, to people outside the group, to the natural world, and to the cosmos.

A religious ideology also “establishes rules for acting in accordance with those relationships” (Conrad and Demarest 1984 4). Religion is a specific type of religious ideology that is “based on beliefs in supernatural beings or forces” accompanied by a standardized presentation, or dogma, and an institutional structure (Conrad and Demarest 1984 5). Political structure, in accord with De Montmollin (1989 206), is the “relatively enduring and abstract norms, principals, or institutions for arranging and regulating relations among social actors.” In both of the examples that will be considered in this work, the norms and principals that define the political structures are drawn from ideology. Religion is, therefore, an integral part of the political structures of both the Mesoamerican and Mesopotamian civilizations that will be discussed. Finally, civilization, though it has an almost infinite number of definitions in anthropology, will be defined here as a degree of complexity characterized by a “well developed social structure, such as stratification of rank; complex division of labor resulting in occupational specialization; intensive agriculture; efficient method for the distribution of foods, raw materials, and luxury items; some large concentration of population; monumental architecture; and political and religious hierarchies in who’s hands rests the administration of the state” (Weaver 1981 506). Given these definitions, the degree of complexity required for a
society to reach the level of civilization is dependent on the existence of a common ideology which allows for the development of those aspects of culture that we use as criterion for a civilization.

Also to be considered here is the definition of the word "evolution," that appears in the title of this work. Although the term has been applied in a variety of contexts and its implications often heatedly debated, its use in this work is only intended to imply patterned change in a cross-cultural context. Evolution is not used here in the traditional sense that usually implies a progression from one form to another which is somehow qualitatively "better." Because ideology is foundational to the emergence and continuation of civilization, the changes that take place within the structure of civilization are intertwined with changes in ideology. Ideology is not static, it changes and is changed by any number of forces within society. The changes that are brought about through a direct appeal to ideology are often unpredictable, and seldom effect only a single aspect of the culture. Because ideology is the foundation of every aspect of a civilization, whether implicitly or explicitly, changes in, or reformulations of, a culture's ideology often result in changes in other aspects of society. These changes, or cultural evolution, have an undeniable ideological component and as such show ideology to be a dynamic force for change rather than simply a static tool employed by the elite as a means of control. The dynamic nature of ideology, and its importance in cultural change, has been illustrated by Conrad and Demarest in their study of Aztec and Inca expansion.
Our analysis of the rapid transformations, expansions, and collapses of the Mexica and Inca states demonstrates that theories of cultural evolution must address some very tricky problems of anthropology and philosophy—problems that archaeologists have been reluctant to face. Ideology and belief systems were shown to be fundamental to the most dynamic aspects of the Mexica and Inca societies. Politically motivated changes in these belief systems created the new ideologies that in turn became both the keys to success and the sources of instability in Aztec and Inca imperialism. Furthermore, the ideological changes restructured the economic systems so that expansion became advantageous for the important interest groups and inescapable as state policy. Thus the histories of these Pre-Columbian empires prove that ideology, however difficult it may be to deal with archaeologically, must be included as a principal variable in analyses of culture change. (Conrad and Demarest 1984:205).

Although these authors relied heavily on ethnographic accounts in their analysis, the relationship of ideology to culture change demonstrated in their work cannot be dismissed simply because it is more difficult to deal with archaeologically. By using ethnographic accounts and records left by literate civilizations in conjunction with archaeological data, it is possible to gain a much better understanding of the role of ideology in culture change.

The purpose of this study, then, will be to define an approach and develop and examine a methodology for studying ideology in early state level civilizations by 1) establishing and illustrating the importance of ideology within civilizations and, as such, in the analysis of the material record created by those civilizations; 2) determining the most basic level at which ideology operates within, and therefore effects the structure of, a civilization and culture, so that it might be included in the corresponding level of theory and analysis; and 3) developing and qualitatively evaluating a possible methodology for including ideology in archaeological theory and analysis of early state level societies.
Current Attempts to Include Ideology

The current discussions surrounding the issue of incorporating ideology, and explanation in general, in archaeology are varied and often bipolar. But the central problem around which these disagreements are formulated are based on the difficulties presented by the broadly applied logical positivist paradigm as propounded by Carl Popper (1987; Renfrew 1982). The difficulties of applying Popper’s criterion for the scientific status of a theory in the social sciences is mainly a product of the inherent impossibility of testability and hence, falsification. Rarely, if ever, are social circumstances repeated exactly, and control variables are non-existent. According to the popular form of the logical-positivist paradigm, the theories generated by anthropology, and the social sciences in general, are not scientific and lack any explanatory ability. Even though Popper’s criterion have been shown to have a limited applicability in the social sciences (Salmon 1982) persisting attempts to apply deductive methods in archaeology have led many researchers in archaeology to one of two positions. The first is a move away from explanatory theory, and concentration on the methodologies of data recovery (Renfrew 1982, 2). Unfortunately, without a theoretical basis, the data and their larger context remains disjointed and mute. The second position taken by researchers is a recognition of the problem inherent in attempts to apply the logical-positivist criterion to the social sciences whereby they are rejected, and new epistemic foundations sought. Scholars such as Michael Shanks (Shanks and Tilley 1987), Christopher Tilley (Shanks and Tilley 1987; Miller and Tilley 1984 1-16, Tilley 1984), Ian Hodder (1992, 1986), Colin Renfrew
(1982. 20-22), and others have attempted to construct a variety of explanatory theories and approaches not based solely on the current paradigm.

Attempts to include ideology in archaeology have become more numerous and sophisticated since the late seventies, but most have remained within the realm of the purely hypothetical and untested by application. Current attempts to include ideology can be divided into two different perspectives: first, ideology as a repressive tool of the dominant class and second, ideology as a dynamic process of negotiation and change within society. Ian Hodder noted these two different general views of the nature of ideology in conjunction with the 1986 World Archaeological Congress.

In rather crude terms one can distinguish two views about ideology in recent archaeological literature. On the one hand, ideology represents the interests of the dominant group in society. The dominant perspective becomes absorbed and ‘taken for granted.’ We become mystified and duped. On the other hand, ideology can be seen as enabling as well as misrepresenting. The second position...suggests that society is made up of different interest groups, with varying ideologies, and that social change comes about through the practice of social debate (Hodder 1992: 135).

Although some progress has been made since Hodder’s publication in 1992, very few authors have progressed beyond foundational concerns and attempted to apply the theoretical principals of ideology to practical archaeological investigations. However, most theorists have been content to use existing data to simply illustrate the possible uses, rather than continuing on to help develop the requisite methodology needed for concrete applications of theories concerning ideology. With the exception of studies like that done by Michael J. Kolb (1994) and those presented in the New Directions in Archaeology Series (Hodder 1982; Miller and Tilley 1984), the variety of theories produced have not
been used to generate any explanation of process in the archaeological record. And of those, many begin from assumptions that the material record simply cannot substantiate; the notable exception being Kolb (1994).

Kolb’s study of monumental architecture in pre-contact Hawaii proceeds from the premise that the rise of religious authority and centralization of political power is evident in the material record as manifested by changes in the amount of energy invested in the construction of monumental structures (1994). Following the work of Bruce Trigger (1990), Kolb views the control of energy as a quantifiable indicator of power and social relationships. Unlike other attempts to include ideology, Kolb links ideology and the material record through means which the data can substantiate. Even though the exact amount of energy expended cannot be quantified in absolute terms, because the specific technologies used cannot be identified, energy can be quantified relative to other projects from the same society and other societies that possessed similar technologies.

Methodology of Ideology

Current attempts to incorporate ideology at a more appropriate level in archaeological analysis have consistently been plagued by methodological problems. The main difficulty lies in the inability to quantify the ideological aspects of material culture, which permeate every aspect of society, into some form which can be numerically represented. It is impossible to separate ideological manifestations from other aspects of material culture due to the fact that there is a symbolic element present in every aspect of
culture. Because ideology is the framework within which all thought and action occurs. Some authors, such as Conrad and Demarest (1984), have attempted to circumvent the problem of quantifying ideological components of the material record by relying almost completely on ethnohistoric data. While this approach does solve the problem by essentially eliminating the necessity of linking and quantifying material manifestations to their ideological components, it does little to expand the theoretical basis necessary for analyzing broader trends within cultures for which no ethnographic data exists. It does, however, provide a body of data to which careful analogies and comparisons can be made.

Other authors, such as many of those who have contributed to the New Directions in Archaeology Series (Miller and Tilley 1984, Hodder 1987), have attempted to link various material aspects of culture to specific symbolic referents. Although these attempts provide interesting analyses of specific material components, they remain extremely vague in relation to the larger body of data and untestable because of the unique nature of the cultural aspects being considered. Furthermore, these studies fail to consider the broader historical processes to which this type of analysis is best suited. The study of ideology is, at its present state of development, dependent on a level of generalization that is only applicable at a regional scale for single artifact categories and individual temporally specific stylistic changes, which are hardly appropriate foundations for the analysis of ideological influences on social change.

Traditional and structural Marxist attempts to include ideology, aptly characterized by Conrad and Demarest (1984 215-216), have not fared well either. Ideology, from a Marxist perspective, is assumed to be solely a mechanism of legitimation used by the
ruling class to perpetuate existing social order. Unfortunately, this view does not address the dynamic nature of ideology and its role in culture change. Ideology does serve to legitimate, and thus perpetuate, the existing social order, but it also serves to motivate the populace and it provides a medium through which social discourse is made possible.

...Review of the Aztec and Inca cases shows, on both empirical and logical grounds, that the dynamics of culture change cannot be understood if legitimation is held to be the only effect of ideological systems. This verifiable reality goes far beyond the usual a priori theoretical perspective on the role of religious ideology. In these two cases, ideology did not just legitimate the social order, as most (Marxist) scholars have argued, or legitimate and motivate social relations, as Godelier has posited. Religious reforms actually helped to generate and form the political, economic, and social order. Thus, ideology was not only a key factor in the historical formation of the Aztec and Inca ‘relations of production’; in fact ideology was the most dynamic aspect of these relations, driving expansionism through legitimation and evangelism, but more importantly through the creation of concrete (and eventually staggering) economic imbalances (Conrad and Demarest 1984. 215-216 and 218).

Ideology, therefore, cannot be realistically viewed as a purely limiting force within society. From the work cited above, as well as several others (Kolb 1994, Friedrich 1989), it has become readily apparent that ideology is a dynamic force which, once appealed to or invoked, can and does effect societies in ways that are not necessarily beneficial to the ruling class and the effects hardly ever limited to the specific area intended. The all encompassing nature of ideology is well demonstrated by the events characterized in the above quote and may be likened to having a ripple effect within society. Because ideological systems are, by necessity, integrated and foundational to the social institutions they allow, any change in one aspect will ultimately induce some degree of corresponding change in all other aspects of society. There are numerous examples, such as the over-expansion of the Aztec and Inca empires referred to in the above quote,
where the results of ideologically motivated action are destructive to all concerned. If ideology was simply a tool of legitimation and limited to the effects or changes its invocation was intended to bring about, this type of effect would not be possible. However, as the Aztec, Inca, and evidence discussed in later sections illustrate, ideology is not only dynamic, but the changes brought about by changes in a culture's ideology are often far reaching and extremely unpredictable.

Two of the more methodologically balanced approaches to the problem of incorporating ideology are Joyce Marcus' 1978 comparative study of Zapotec and Maya religious material manifestations and Michael Kolb's work on monumental construction and religious authority in pre-contact Hawaii (1994). Although Marcus' work depends on ethnohistoric data it makes careful use of the archaeological record. It provides a good methodological foundation for incorporating ideology and identifying aspects of it in the material record. But, by her own admission, it is only a beginning. Although she establishes a solid connection between the functions of various architectural features and the ethnohistoric data, she does not address the material correlates of the social processes involved. In order to construct a theoretical framework capable of supporting analysis of ideology and its interaction with the material record a methodology capable of supporting it is necessary.

Michael J. Kolb (1994) takes this approach a step further by attempting to show how culture change is reflected in changes in monumental architecture construction, ceremonial ostentation, and consumption of ritual goods. He provides a diachronic perspective of religious authority in pre-contact Hawaii based on the amount of energy.
invested in monumental construction. Following Bruce Trigger’s work on monumental
architecture and symbolic behavior (1990), Kolb bases his analysis on the amount of
energy expended in monumental construction as an indicator of political structure. He
views expended energy as a symbolic representation of the relationship between elite and
commoner. Kolb also correlates the material changes observed in the archaeological
record with existing oral tradition concerning events of the same time period. Although
Kolb’s analysis adds considerably more depth to the methodology originated by Marcus
(1974), both Kolb and Trigger fail to consider resources other than energy that are
represented in monumental construction. Kolb does consider the form of monumental
constructions, but not function. And function can provide another level of analysis, as can
material, relative position, size, and quantity. But pursuing these issues, central to the
methodology to be presented here, the foundational assumptions and arguments warrant
discussion.

Theoretical Base

Ideology is the most important aspect of culture and, to an even greater degree,
civilization because it is the foundation upon which the institutions that make it possible
are built. It is certainly not the only aspect, but ideology is the basis of culture and culture
change. Although the environment, subsistence strategies, inter-group relations, and a
plethora of other factors influence cultures in a variety of ways, ideology provides the
basis of communication, through a common perception, that allows interaction between
individuals, groups, and the universe in which they exist. Ideology defines the parameters within which people are taught to perceive and communicate the world around them and they, in turn, effect all other aspects of existence. Because ideology is such a fundamental aspect of culture, it is difficult to delimit its effects. However, by considering ideology in terms of broader historical trends and utilizing cross-cultural comparisons, archaeology can continue to build a theoretical and methodological foundation capable of providing a better understanding of how, and perhaps ultimately why, culture change takes place.

Ideology can best be described as a set of ideas, ideals, beliefs, and representations that form the cognitive and normative forms of perception within a group. It is through these aspects that individuals and societies construct a perspective from which to view, as well as act in and on, their environment. It is a set of “interrelated ideas that provides the members of the group with a rationale for their existence” (Conrad and Demarest 1984 4). It defines the group, explains relationships within the group and with other groups, and describes the relationship of the group to nature and the cosmos. That is not to imply that ideology is unchanging, it is continually modified and refined in response to the social and physical environmental change, but it also provides a means by which change can be brought about and justified in either realm. Ideological change is a dynamic process dependent on the dialectical interaction of symbol and action (Miller and Tilley 1984 13). The set of ideas, ideals, beliefs, and representations that compose an ideology create an interlocking system of rationalization and justifications that inform and explain the environment. When Voltaire commented that “if God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him,” he was expressing a fundamental element of the human condition.
Knowledge and belief must form an integrated whole which rationalizes and explains the world. Worldviews are not built solely on the known, but attempt to establish some relationship between the known, unknown, unknowable, and the individual. The means by which the known, unknown, and unknowable are incorporated into an individual or groups model of reality is through ideology. Ideology then is the most basic and necessary element of how we form our perceptual constructions of reality. Perceptual constructs are nothing more than an integrated system of expectations about the environment, which are based on ideological beliefs. And how we perceive reality defines the parameters from which an action or reaction is formulated in any given situation. Perceptual constructs are composed of symbolic representations which are the basis of expression and communication of ideology. And one of the most important, especially when dealing with the material record, is action. The interaction between symbol and action is what provides the possibility of culture change.

An important aspect of the dialectic between symbol and action is intent. The construction of intent is based on, and reflects, the perceptual construct of the individual or group. Using a common definition of intent as "the state of mind operative at the time of action... meaning, significance... purpose" (Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary 1984 635), intent results from a discrepancy between an individual, or individuals, ideology and that of larger society. That is to say that without a perceived discrepancy between the belief of an individual, or group, and the "reality" of larger society, there is no motivation for social action; and therefore no impetus for the construction of an intent for change. For example, an individual who believes he is being taken advantage of by
another will normally attempt to rectify the unequal relationship through some course of action. However, if the individual does not perceive that he is being taken advantage of, there is no need to intend a course of action to rectify a situation that he/she do not perceive to exist; in other words, there is no purpose to enact change. Before a course of action can be enacted it must be intended, or expected to achieve some result.

Intent also implies motive. In order for an action to be realized there must be some reason, or perceived benefit, in it for the actor Although the concepts of intent and motive may at first seem out of place, they are essential to an understanding of the concept of power and the dynamics of any dialectic in culture change. Any general theory which concerns itself with cultural evolution must, by necessity, incorporate human volition as an essential element. Without human volition any theory of culture change becomes deterministic. Conrad and Demarest noted this in their 1984 study:

A second ‘lesson’...touches upon an even more treacherous problem of ‘free will’ versus necessity in human history. Anthropologists are able to skirt the irresolvable questions surrounding the issue. However, we must confront the fact that the only reconstructions of culture change able to survive scrutiny are ones which consider the motivations and action of individuals and interest groups. If follows that human volition must be incorporated into any convincing general theory on cultural evolution (Conrad and Demarest 1984: 205-6).

The responsibility and means for group motivation and action, especially at the state level, is concentrated in a group or individual, or centralized, in the form of a political structure. And political structures, or hierarchies, necessarily imply the existence of power. Power can be viewed as having two distinct expressions; power to and power over. Power to refers to power as an "integral and recursive element in all aspects of
social life” (Miller and Tilley 1984: 5). Power over refers specifically to forms of social control. The distinction between the two forms of power is important because it allows an analysis of the different means by which ideology is expressed (or manifest in the material world). Every individual has the power to chose a course of action, or reaction, in any given situation in which their ideology does not match their perceptual construct. Individuals or groups inherently have the power to act in their environment, but not necessarily the power to act on it. In order for the individual or group to act on their environment they must have power over it. Power over is synonymous with the ability to enact changes in an individual or group’s environment through intending a course of action based on ideology. Because power over allows the enactment of a motive perceived to be beneficial to the actor, the resultant manifestations will only be accepted if the intent is realized. If the result of the action does not match the intent behind it, then the situation is reevaluated and the process repeated. This is the dialectic that allows ideology its dynamic aspect.

Within any society power over is a consequence of having the consent of enough of the groups members to override those that do not consent, power over must be invested in an individual by other members of the group. And the investment of power is justified by ideology, and more specifically religious ideology.

Religious authority is inextricably intertwined with ideology, and as a result of a group’s perceptual construct. It draws justification from an individual or group’s foundational beliefs. Once established, religious authority operates as a “set of strategies for negotiating social inequalities and legitimating group interests,” or the interests of
those with power over the groups (Kolb 1994: 521). Because of its connection to ideology, religious authority encompasses:

Nature, cause, time, and person and is constantly redefined and reshaped by the dialectical processes that structure the social order in accordance with actual historical events...It helps construct a social order by reifying hierarchical relationships as a form of exchange between elite and commoner and encouraging participation in the societywide belief system by enhancing the interests of the dominated class” (Kolb 1994: 521).

It is essential to an understanding of the concept of ideology to note the difference between ideology and religion, as the two are often confused. Religion is a particular form of religious ideology which is based on beliefs in supernatural beings or forces presented in a dogmatic fashion, accompanied by an institutional structure. Although the concept of ideology, as presented here, contains religion, it is not limited by it.

Religious authority can be viewed as a “technology of production that channels knowledge and information into directions prescribed by the dominated groups” that “furnishes a practical armature for the organization of the political economy” (Kolata 1992: 71). The investment of religious authority is justified by an exchange between the invested and the investors. Those who are invested with it are perceived as being able to provide a service (the beneficial affectation of the supernatural on behalf of the group) that cannot be obtained elsewhere. “An emerging elite class would employ its knowledge of the supernatural on behalf of society in exchange for control of the political economy, that is, the appropriation, distribution, and consumption of resources such as labor and territory” (Kolb 1994: 521). The control of the political economy is exchanged for what is perceived as economic gain for the investors. Ideology provides the justification necessary to explain why it is advantageous for one section of society to invest their
power in another. It also establishes the parameters of acceptable behavior and interaction between groups within a society. As Clifford Geertz has noted, ideology is not only used as a tool for legitimation, it is also used as a means of reacting to new social circumstances:

The function of ideology is to make autonomous politics possible by providing the authoritative concepts that render it meaningful. The suasive images by means of which it can sensibly grasped...In one sense, this statement is but another way of saying that ideology is a response to strain...It is a loss of orientation that most directly gives rise to ideological activity, an inability, or lack of usable models, to comprehend the universe of civic rights and responsibilities in which one finds oneself located (Geertz 1973: 218-9).

"Ideological activity" and its material manifestations are often most visible in relation to the political economy (Geertz 1973: 218-19). This is primarily due to the fact that it is in the political economy that power over the environment, or material change, is expressed on a large scale. An illustrative example of this type of material change is the construction of monumental architecture. The political economy is reflected in the material record in many different ways and has been the subject of numerous studies (Marcus 1976, 1978 and 1983, Kolb 1994, Willey 1990; Algaze 1993). However, this discussion will be limited to monumental architecture, because it is evident in nearly all early state level societies, preserves relatively well, and is an excellent indicator of political and religious structures.

Monumental architecture, as has been argued by Trigger (1990) and Kolb (1994), is a symbolic representation of power expressed in the form of energy consumption. It is also an expression of social stratification and cohesion. As noted by Kolb, monumental
architecture also provides a concrete spatial representation of the amount of energy the elite class is capable of controlling or extracting from the other classes.

The energy invested in monumental architecture should reflect the degree to which elites and commoners are bound together by a common ideology of rulership. It is no coincidence that many ancient societies around the world experienced a rapid increase in the size and grandeur of monuments during their formative periods as the relationship between elite and commoner was being negotiated and materially expressed (Kolb 1994:521).

Monumental architecture, or a construction that has a function beyond the space provided, provides an interesting perspective on the uses of power and how it is expressed within a society. Bruce Trigger has noted that monumental architecture is present in all of the early civilizations and easily recognized and defined by the scale, quality, and elaboration of the structure in comparison to the other structures present:

Its principal defining feature is that its scale and elaboration exceed the requirements of any physical functions that a building is intended to perform. A palace may require large numbers of stone rooms and accounting offices if its to serve the needs of the king or high official who inhabits it. Yet the fact that archaeologists can so easily recognize buildings that in terms of size and quality of their construction greatly exceed what is required for such practical needs eloquently testifies to the importance of monumental structures in complex societies. Such buildings were constructed in all of the early civilizations that developed in regions such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, South Asia, China, Mexico, Peru, and West Africa (Trigger 1990: 120-21).

The energy required to erect a monumental construction would seem to exceed any practical function that the building might serve. Extensive studies have shown that human populations tend to minimize the expenditure of energy and maximize the return (Trigger 1990: 123). What then is gained by erecting a monumental construction?
Trigger suggests that the control of energy needed to construct monumental architecture is symbolized by it.

Energy plays a role in both realms; in one as something 'real' and in the other as a set of concepts about something 'real'. The universal recognition that the control of energy is fundamental for all aspects of human existence makes it the common currency in terms of which political relationships can be measured. Recognition that this is so expands the materialist perspective to take account of the symbolic and idealistic components that loom so large in the archaeological record (Trigger 1990: 131).

That energy is the most fundamental and universal expression of political power is supported by the fact that it appears in the material record of every complex civilization known. It also provides a means of quantifying an aspects of the material record that directly reflects ideology. It is also a "highly visible and enduring form of such consumption", and it "plays an important role in shaping the political and economic behavior" of the population (Trigger 1990: 128). Trigger has also equated the function or type of monumental constructions with political expressions of power:

This explains why, as systems based on inequality evolved, monumental architecture loomed so large in the archaeological record. It further explains why, as political relations of domination changed, the type of buildings by means of which that power was expressed also altered (1990: 128).

The symbolism conveyed by monumental architecture in any given period is, however, more important than the degree of complexity of political organization or the degree to which political power has been consolidated. The question then becomes: through what means is the consolidation occurring? One method of examining the means by which the consolidation of power in early state level societies occurred is by
considering, as Trigger has suggested, the types of monumental constructions that predominated during different periods.

If monumental architecture plays a significant role in helping to consolidate new social, political and economic formations, it is possible that the different types of buildings that predominated at any one period may provide insights into the social processes that were at work. The emphasis on temples in the early stages of Mesopotamia, Mesoamerica, and Peruvian civilizations may reflect a tendency toward the centralization of power in the hands of kings (Trigger 1990: 128).

As will be illustrated by the data, the types of monumental architecture which are found in early Mesopotamia and Mesoamerica provide substantial support for these conclusions. It appears that these early kings were consolidating and legitimating their power through appeal to ideology, which is reflected in the types of buildings they constructed. What Trigger fails to address is the purpose of including religious structures in monumental construction. If the types of buildings are also symbolic of political power, what role does religion play in the process? Monumental religious architecture is found in every early civilization. Whether in the form of tombs, temples, or statues, religion seems to have had a tangible political value.

Energy is, however, not the only thing represented by monumental architecture. Monumental constructions represent not only labor, but also materials (some of which are finite and have a value beyond the labor, or energy, expended in their procurement), the space the construction consumes, and the position of constructions in relation to each other, or proximity. Time constraints prohibit a discussion of materials, their sources, availability, value, and cultural designations of sacred materials versus profane; however, further research on the subject could potentially contribute a great deal to this type of
analysis. The later two, space and proximity, are particularly important aspects because they are relatively less variable between cultures and provide an excellent basis for cross-cultural comparison. Consumed space and proximity represent the importance of the structures function and symbolism within a society and help establish the hierarchical relationships between these different aspects.

The space a monumental construction consumes is a limited resource, especially since most of them occupy strategic or protected areas. In nearly every instance where monumental constructions are present they cluster around the center of the site, or are set apart in a grouping or space designated as sacred by the culture. The later case is usually applicable only to those constructions associated with burials or places of pilgrimage. Those constructions that function as part of the daily routine of the site are almost always located in a central position. Because there is a limited distance or radius from which the greatest number of people can gain access to or be effected by an area, the space at the center of the settlement is the most accessible and, therefore, the most valuable. If monumental architecture symbolizes or embodies power as Trigger (1990) has suggested, then in order to effectively communicate that power to the population it must be visible to them. The greater the number of people that that power is communicated to the more effective or useful it will be. So, in order for the symbolism, or power, embodied in a monumental construction to be the most effective by reaching the greatest number of people, it must be placed in a centralized location, and, in fact, nearly all are. It follows that the buildings that occupy a central location are those which must be visible to, or
effect, the greatest number of individuals within that society and reflect the various aspects of culture that are institutionalized and centralized.

Central-Place Theory, as used by Marcus (1976. 24-25) and discussed in more detail later, is applicable not only as a measure of the hierarchical relationships between sites, but, slightly modified and rescaled, to monumental constructions within sites as well. Central-Place Theory views settlement size and location as indicators of the hierarchical relationships between them. These same principles can also elucidate the relationships between monumental constructions, as well as their symbolic referents or institutionalized functions.

Implied in the above arguments is the importance of proximity. The same principals that Trigger (1990) and Kolb (1994) use to support their supposition that "architecture gives the relationships between people a precise definition" (Kolb 1994), also suggest that the space occupied by, and spatial relationships between, monumental constructions are also symbolic of the relationships between people and, more directly, the institutions the constructions represent. The institutional functions of the monumental constructions, or at least those dedicated to political administration and religion being considered here, and the spatial relationships between the buildings themselves provides a means of determining the hierarchical relationships between the institutions they embody.

Therefore, by analyzing the types of buildings, their functions, the space they occupy, and their proximity to each other (or spatial relationship) we can gain a better insight into the forces shaping culture change within societies. Each of these aspects, their
relationships to each other, and the symbolic elements they embody, are indicative of the broader historical trends (and perhaps even their causes) that shaped those.

**Methodology**

In order to better incorporate the role of ideology in archaeological theory, a methodology must be developed that is capable of supporting the analysis of its various manifestations in the material record. It seems possible to construct such a methodology based on the type of material remains that express belief indirectly. The theoretical base, presented in the preceding section, implies an approach that is capable of incorporating a wide variety of aspects of the material record; however, the formation processes and preservation of the material record of the civilizations being considered here dictate that this study focus on monumental architecture.

Monumental architecture, ritual artifacts, and art styles all represent concrete expressions of belief systems. But, monumental architecture, which will be the focus of this study, can be analyzed in terms of form, quantity, space consumed, proximity (or spatial relation), function, and energy required for construction. The assumption implicit in the methodological foundation to be presented here, is that ideology is inextricably bound to all aspects of a civilization and cannot change or be changed without corresponding changes occurring in other aspects of society. Therefore, changes in monumental architecture, must necessarily represent ideological changes, which are also identifiable in other aspects of the material record. One of the most reliable indicators of
change, other than changes in monumental construction, are represented in the written records that have survived. Changes in the types of events that were recorded, by the segment of society that had knowledge of writing, and the associations of those events to the religious and political structures, can provide insight into elements of a culture that were considered important by the society itself. It could be argued that the written record does not reflect societies values, but those of the elite. However, here we are considering society as an organic whole, rather than the ideologically disassociated, value conflicted, segmented conglomerate of subpopulations and subcultures that has become so prevalent in Marxist, and feminist models of society. The pitfalls of overusing the concept of resistance, which is central to the fractionalized view of societies propounded in Marxist and feminist models, has been aptly characterized by Michael F Brown.

In an after-dinner talk served up to the Association of Social Anthropologists by Marshall Sahlins in 1983 he noted that "the new functionalism..." consists of "translating the apparently trivial into the fatefully political..." My intention is not to disparage the struggles of the downtrodden but to needle the pretensions of the privileged. More importantly the indiscriminate use of resistance and related concepts undermines their analytical utility, at the same time strongly skewing the project of cultural anthropology in the direction inspired by the work of Foucault: culture as prison, culture as insane asylum, culture as "hegemonic domination of the [insert other of choice]" (1996: 729 & 730; italics added).

The written record provides an additional avenue of research that, unlike the material record, is a direct representation of the society, by the society. How societies perceive themselves is as, and in some cases more, important that attempts to reconstruct an etic version through the material record. One of the primary reasons the cultures of Mesopotamia and Mesoamerica were chosen was because of each left written records that
can be used to test the analysis of trends and changes observed in the archaeological record.

The methodology explored here will be presented in a qualitative form. The data could be translated into a quantitative form, but that is beyond the scope of this work. The main objective here is to evaluate the potential of a methodology based on the analysis of four attributes of monumental architecture for determining the relationships between political and religious structures and the role each plays in cultural change in early state level societies.

The space consumed by monumental constructions can be analyzed in relation to two separate aspects: the amount of space consumed in relation to the site as a whole and the amount consumed in relation to the central area of the site. Proximity, or spatial relations between constructions, is an aspect which symbolically and practically represents the relationships between the institutions embodied in, or symbolized by, monumental constructions and will be used as an indicator of the hierarchical structure of the various institutions. The relative size of constructions not only provide an indicator of which institutions were most important, but also which have the greatest symbolic value. The fourth aspect of analysis is the amount of energy required for construction of a monumental work. However, since this aspect has been explored by numerous authors, it will only be briefly considered here. It should be noted, though, that energy estimates are not a reliable index in absolute terms unless the exact method, or technologies, used in construction are known. Comparative estimates, which consider estimates as culturally
and temporally specific, provide more realistic indicators in cases where construction methods have not been established.

**Overview of The Data**

The civilizations that provided the data to be presented here were chosen for several reasons. The first, and foremost, is that some form of written record exists for each. Secondly, each was the first society, within the tradition of that geographical region, to demonstrate a state level. And finally, the two societies had no demonstrable contact, and therefore represent independent cases. Given these facts the data can provide two separate, testable cases that will demonstrate the reliability of this methodology cross-culturally.

The two civilizations to be used are the Mesopotamian and Maya. The sites used from each represent centers of political power and should provide a macro scale model of the interaction between various institutions within their spheres of influence. Each site evidences various forms of monumental architecture that have survived.
Chapter 2: Mesopotamia

Within the region of Mesopotamia there existed various city states between approximately 3500 and 500 BC which were in nearly continual competition with each other for political supremacy, yet each had very similar cultures. For the purposes of this investigation a normative view of the culture of these city states will be adopted in order to provide a broader perspective on the ideological patterns. However, exceptions will be noted where appropriate.

The region in and around the Tigrus-Euphrates river drainage, collectively referred to here as Mesopotamia, has been and continues to be something of an enigma. Though numerous sites have been excavated and over 40,000 cuneiform tablets deciphered, a comprehensive view of the culture of Mesopotamia remains elusive.

The frustration many researchers have expressed is in large part a result of the nature of the data available. Leo Oppenheim expressed the frustration of many scholars when he commented that:

Many areas in the interwoven spheres of Mesopotamian civilization can be singled out for which intelligible information on specific scientific and technological achievements, on ingenious social adaptations, and on well defined artistic formulations is preserved. This material usually covers only a restricted area and period, permitting but an occasional insight into a perhaps unique situation whose relationship to the overall picture can well be linked to an accumulation of irregular blotches and short lines meandering from nowhere to nowhere, suddenly disappearing, leaving wide empty spaces on the grid of time and locale (Oppenheim 1977: 334).

Though many cuneiform tablets have survived, few record historical events. The majority of them come from the library of Assurbanipal at Nineveh and contain astrological forecasts. The buildings that have been the main focus of much of the
archaeological excavation done in the area are monumental constructions which served as religious centers, palaces, and grandiose public works. Complex formation processes, the lack of systematic excavation at many of the sites, and the repeated interruption of modern investigations by political instabilities, have generated a data base that is seemingly misleading and unrepresentative in certain areas. However, the available data, much of which was located and excavated because of monumental structures, does provide enough information to answer the question being considered here. And although much of the written record does not refer specifically to historical events, enough of it has survived for us to be able to reconstruct many aspects relevant to the religious and political structures.

The societies of Mesopotamia are seemingly a mosaic of diversity, but they also have much in common. The ecological constraints of the Tigrus-Euphrates river valley required the civilization that emerged there to import a wide variety of necessities in order to support large populations (Algaze 1993 1). Much of what was needed was imported from the surrounding regions. The "...processes leading to the emergence of city-states in the alluvium could only have taken place against a much wider background, one in which cross cultural contacts and interregional exchange occupied a prominent position" (Algaze 1993 1). But despite the diversity, there was one essential element that all of these city states shared: a common ideology.
Figure 1: Area map of Mesopotamia (after Roaf 1990: 191)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Northern Mesopotamia</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Bronze Age</td>
<td>Aceramic Hassuna</td>
<td>Uruk Uruk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samarra</td>
<td>Isin-Larsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ninevite 5</td>
<td>Old Babylonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Halaf</td>
<td>Assyro-Assyrian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kassite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle Babylonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neo-Babylonian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Chronology of Mesopotamia (after Roaf 1990: 8-9)
Mesopotamian Political Structures

The political structure of Mesopotamia is inextricably intertwined with the ideology. More specifically, it is so closely bound to religious ideology that the two are nearly inseparable. Although Mesopotamia may, on the surface, seem to provide a classic example of city-state interaction, the records that have been deciphered suggest that the framework in which the interaction between cities took place is not well described by this model. The Mesopotamian perceptual construct was inhabited by all manner of supernatural influences that effected even the most minute details of everyday life. And the political realm was not exempt from these influences. The ruler was considered to be the representative of the patron god of the city and the only means through which the people could pursue their interests in the supernatural realm.

The rulers of the various city states had three different titles: *en*, *ensi*, and *lugal*. Roughly translated they mean “lord, governor, and king”, respectively (Roaf 1990: 82). Although there is considerable difference in the use of these titles between the various city states, there is general agreement as to what the titles denoted. The title *en* was associated with religious duties and “originally was probably a priest” (Roaf 1990: 82). *Lugal*, literally translated as “big man”, was a more secular role. And the title *ensi*, or governor suggests that the ruler was also a vassal in some respect, as it has be shown in the documents to have been subordinate to the title *lugal* (Roaf 1990:82). the title *ensi* may also be a reflection of the fact that rulers held their power only as an agent of their god. Therefore, it is impossible to make a distinction between purely religious and purely political structures, in Mesopotamian culture. Although religion and politics are separated...
in contemporary ideological constructs, the people of Mesopotamia had a radically
different view of the universe. Any attempt to separate politics from religion, and retain a
reasonable view of Mesopotamian culture, is simply impossible. The ruler was the earthly
agent of his god, and as such his person and actions were considered divine.

Mesopotamian Religious Structures

In order to better understand the connection between religious and political power
in Mesopotamian culture, some explanation of the nature of the religion is necessary
Mesopotamian religious beliefs have been partially preserved on the thousands of
cuneiform tablets recovered from the library of Assurbanipal at Nineveh (Oppenheim
1977 15). Although it is not possible to reconstruct the complexities of the belief system
of each city states and their corresponding rituals, the broader patterns and common
themes can be reconstructed with some degree of certainty.

The one overriding principal of Mesopotamian religion that can be singled out
from the web of complexity that surrounds the topic is the inherent social stratification
evidenced by both textual and archaeological data.

If one separates the royal religion from that of the common man, and
both from that of the priest, one could possibly obtain something approaching
an unobstructed vista. A large part of what we assume to be Mesopotamian
religion has meaning only in relation to royal personages—and for this reason
distorts our concept. (Oppenheim 1977 181)

The prayers, fasts, mortification, and taboos were imposed only on the king
(Oppenheim 1977 182). Similarly, the only individual who had communication with the
gods was the ruler. The commoners had contact, limited though it was, with the gods through contact with the king. The ruler of a city, state, or dynasty was the bridge between the sacred and the profane. The priests saw to the daily needs of the temple and performed the necessary daily rituals, but it was the ruler who had the privilege, and responsibility, of expanding and glorifying the god through conquest and monumental construction (Oppenheim 1977: 182, Wellard 1972: 161). The monumental works represented not only the king's power, but that of the god's as well. Each was inextricably interwoven with the other.

It should also be noted that this connection between the ruler, his works, and the god explains the pattern of destruction and reconstruction of monumental works found throughout Mesopotamia. The consolidation of power by a conqueror could not be accomplished until not only the king, but the god to which he was intimately tied, was conquered. And the god could not be conquered without destroying the symbols of its power. The ziggurats, palaces, and special function buildings constructed by a ruling faction symbolized the god's power and were often destroyed to symbolize the death of the god and his power over the people ruled by the king.

**The Mesopotamian Written Record**

In order to better understand the Mesopotamian ideological system some discussion of the written record is necessary. The written record of both civilizations to be considered in this work provides a means of examining the interaction between
important aspects of the material record and the ideological considerations that motivated
the behavior that created it. The use of the written word was limited to a relatively small
number of scribes and elites. Because the literacy rate in both the Mesoamerican and
Mesopotamian civilizations was extremely low by today's standards, the ways in which the
written record was used (i.e. the content, subject, and context) is a good indication of
which activities and events were considered to be the most important within those
societies. The number of literate individuals within these societies limited the use of the
written word. It is only logical that the limitations the literacy rate implied effectively
relegated the recording and transmission of knowledge and events to those activities that
were considered essential, either directly or indirectly, to the organization and operation of
the state.

Scribes were highly trained bureaucrats and specialists, who must have
wielded a great deal of power as the majority of the population was illiterate, even
at the highest level. State documents and private letters all begin with the phrase
'say to X' or 'say to my lord the king', indicating clearly that at least originally,
when the formula first came into use, the recipients were unable to read for
themselves. Descriptions of the training of scribes have survived and show that
it was a long and thorough process...As the technical skills of the scribes
increased, the amount of information they could transmit began to increase too.
The majority of tablets probably continued to be economic in purpose but historical
and literary compositions began to appear, together with letters and dedicatory
inscriptions of all sorts...There are also dictionaries and scientific and
mathematical treatises used by the scribes in their capacity as surveyors and
astronomers. (Crawford 1993: 153)

We find no records which list the names of a rug merchant's dogs or letters from
campaigning soldiers to their families because the written word was not used for recording
such matters. The limited availability of the scribes that were familiar with the writing
system limited its use to those aspects of civilization under consideration here; the political and ideological.

Although the material record (in its strictest sense) can provide information on the ideology and political structure of a group, the type of information provided is limited to a strictly etic perspective, and as such limits the interpretation of the data. The ideas, ideals, and implications contained in the written record have the potential to provide a somewhat more balanced perspective by incorporating an emic element to the analysis. The inclusion of the written record in discussions of ideology can help us to better understand, in a normative sense, the mental, or perceptual, context in which the material manifestations of ideology were created, and perhaps even some of the uses for which they were intended.

The Mesopotamian writing system, or cuneiform, was developed in the fourth millennium BC in southern Mesopotamia (Roaf 1990: 151). Cuneiform was developed over a period of hundreds of years and was eventually used to record information from many different spoken languages. The script, which was originally pictographic in nature, became more abstract and added phonetic elements as it developed (Roaf 1990:69-70; Crawford 1993: 152). The cuneiform script has been found on several different mediums, but impressions made on clay tablets, that hardened as they dried or were baked, and inscription on stone monuments represent an overwhelming majority of surviving texts.

There are essentially three main aspects of the written record that are relevant to discussions of ideology: content, subject, and context. The content of the written record is perhaps the most difficult of the three to use effectively in analysis, yet has the greatest potential to communicate the perspective of individuals and groups within the society.
The difficulties in evaluating the content, or what is specifically being communicated, are attributable to problems with decipherment, translation, and the demarcational implications embedded in the terms and literary constructions used in the texts. These problems, simply stated, are due to the differences between modern and ancient perceptual constructs. Because decipherment and translation of ancient texts are very specialized disciplines, the comments made concerning content will remain general and restricted to those aspects that are directly related to subject and context.

Many of the scholars who have concerned themselves with ancient records are quick to point out a lack of accuracy in the events documents often purport to record. The eminent Mesopotamian scholar A. Leo Oppenheim expressed the problem in terms of "truth."

Only few cuneiform texts expressly purport to write what, in the traditional Western sense, we would call "history." Many more refer to actual happenings for purposes other than that of merely recording these events...In all instances, we have to keep foremost in our mind that even strictly historiographic documents are literary works and that they manipulate the evidence, consciously or not, for specific political and artistic purposes. Even these few texts that are patiently more reliable than others, whose aim is mainly literary, cater to preconceived ideological requirements. In short, nearly all these texts are as willfully unconcerned with the "truth" as any other "historical text" of the ancient Near East. (1977:143-144)

It is interesting to note the quotation marks that accompany the word "truth" in the above quotation, as they seem to imply, from the context, an objective form of the word. Regardless of the intended meaning of the quotation marks, their existence draws attention to a distinction that needs to be made concerning the content of any text that originates in a cultural context other than our own. Although it has been the subject of philosophical debate for centuries, "truth" is not, has never been, and can never be an
objective concept in the analysis of other cultures. Every ideology implies its own version
of what is "real" or "true" for a group. The amount of truth contained in Mesopotamian
texts cannot be defined in some objective sense, or in the sense that our common Western
perspective implies. We, as archaeologists, can compare our reconstructions of events
recorded in the archaeological record to the same events as recorded in the written record,
but if we consider the material record more "objective" or "truthful" than the written
record we are guilty of ethnocentrism, ignoring the ideological system that produced the
material record under consideration, the associated perceptual construct and the behavior
it implies. Simply stated, reconstructions of events based solely on the material record
provide an etic perspective that can easily be confused with objective "truth." However,
the emic perspective of the same events, recorded in the documents, can provide a version
of the "truth" as the author, who represents the civilization's perceptual construct,
perceived the event. The documentary version of the "truth" cannot be dismissed as
inaccurate or propagandistic if we are to better understand the perceptual constructs
through which these ancient cultures attempted to understand their worlds. The amount
of "truth" contained in the texts can only be evaluated through contradictions between
documents that record the same events. The "preconceived ideological requirements" that
Oppenheim referred to are precisely what make the content of ancient texts so valuable as
tools for understanding how ancient cultures perceived their world. The same
"preconceived ideological requirements" that are catered to in the content of the texts are
also evident, and perhaps less obscured, in the subjects of the texts and the contexts in
which they are found.
The subjects of cuneiform texts can be divided into seven distinct categories: administrative, legal, formulation of sacred tradition, annals, scholarly texts, synchronic communication, and ceremonial uses (Oppenheim 1977 230-35). As will be demonstrated, each of these categories is either directly or indirectly related to the political and ideological systems. The fact that the written record is so intimately tied to the political and religious, or ideological, spheres serves to further demonstrate the foundational nature and emic importance of ideology and its operationalization through the political system. Had the written record, which was tightly controlled or limited by scribal affiliation to the priesthood, been used more widely within the Mesopotamian civilization or focused on secular activities unrelated to the ideological system, the conclusions implied by the data would be less ideologically oriented. However, the subjects of the cuneiform texts only serve to further illustrate the importance of ideology within the Mesopotamian civilization.

The subject of the majority of cuneiform texts is administrative and directly related to collection of resources necessary for the maintenance of the palaces and temples. The officials of the Mesopotamian bureaucracies who were responsible for the collection of tribute used the writing system to record the goods and services paid to the gods and the ruler.

The context of the administrative records is best understood in terms of the relationship between bureaucrats and the people they served. The practice of recording bureaucratic transactions using cuneiform rather than some other operational method of bookkeeping, such as tallies or counters which were utilized in Mesopotamia outside the
sphere of public administration (Oppenhein 1977 230-31), suggests a ritualized or
formalized method that has correlates in the supernatural realm that the natural world was
thought to mimic or reflect. The bureaucracy, and its methods, was not only considered
to be a reflection of the supernatural realm, but also functioned as a means of social
integration. Oppenheim suggested that in both Mesopotamia and Egypt the bureaucracy
was accepted and related to the supernatural.

In Mesopotamia as well as Egypt the total acceptance of bureaucracy as a
social phenomenon, or rather as a technique of social integration, found a curious
echo on the speculative level. In certain cuneiform texts describing the nether
world, mention is made of the scribe of the ruler of the dead who keeps lists with
the names of all those who are to die each day...Later eschatological speculation
deftly changed this imagery from the realm of bureaucracy, where the wise
administrator takes care of his clients and dependents, to that of deterministic
apprehension and the submission of man to the inscrutable fate fixed by the deity
(1977: 231)

The administrative texts that served the bureaucracy were associated with the
supernatural realm. The relationship between the bureaucrat or administrator and the
public he served was a reflection of the relationship between the gods and the people they
were responsible for, and the methods used by the administrations were a reflection of
those used by the gods.

The second category, or legal texts, include the collections of laws that are direct
statements of what was acceptable within the ideological and political parameters defined
for the society. Although these texts do not reflect the manner and circumstances of their
enforcement, they do provide statements of acceptable behavior as adjudicated by the king
in the resolution of disputes. These texts record the decisions made by the king, not
prescriptive laws for which transgressors were automatically punishable (Oppenheim 1977: 231-32).

The context of Mesopotamian legal records is very similar to that of the administrative texts as both were rationalized in terms of the relationship between patron (the god and king) and the client (the citizens). The use of the writing system to codify legal decisions is an interesting development in a society in which laws are descriptive rather than prescriptive. Oppenheim states that “...the fateful concept that reality should adjust to the requirements of a written corpus remains unknown to Mesopotamia” (1977: 231) suggesting that laws were not idealized standards of behavior, but reflective of behavioral norms already apparent. These norms were reflected in the decisions of the king that resolved disputes or grievances brought before him and recorded in order to provide his appointed judges with guidelines for adjudicating common or routine matters in his absence. Because the king was considered to be the earthly representative of the god, all judicial matters were ultimately his responsibility regardless of delegation to lesser officials.

The other recorded form of legal texts are the “codes”, represented by inscriptions such as the “laws” of Hammurabi. These types of inscriptions represent judicial decisions made by kings and recorded to demonstrate their achievements as just and fair rulers (Bottéro 1992: 156-84). The “codes” do not represent prescriptive guidelines of behavior for which deviation was automatically punished. Oppenheim has suggested that these types of law collections represent a means by which the king, and the god he represented,
attempted to subtly influence behavior, rather than a prescription for acceptable behavior that was widely enforced.

One cannot possibly mention Hammurapi without referring to his code of laws, whose contents and social aims present a unique view of the Mesopotamia of that period. Still, one should bear in mind that this code—as well as other, earlier, Akkadian and Sumerian codifications—does not show any direct relationship to the legal practices of the time. Its contents are rather to be considered in many essential respects a traditional literary expression of the king's social responsibilities and his awareness of the discrepancies between existing and desirable conditions. Mesopotamian codifications under these circumstances become a repository of aspirations to change such situations and to emphasize the king's and the god's interest in the welfare of his subjects. (Oppenheim 1977:158 and 231)

The purposes of the legal "codes" were that of "superseding oral tradition and practices" and "bringing the law into line with changed social, economic, or political conditions" (Oppenheim 1977:231). However, the extent to which these expressions became incorporated into the behavioral norms of the general population remains unknown.

The written record was also used in the formulation of sacred tradition. The subject of the texts included in sacred tradition, or sacred lore, are the stories of deities, religious figures, or groups of people within the society (Oppenheim 1977:232). The context of the texts that record sacred traditions were "incorporated into an ideology" that "sustained a circle of worshipers or congregation of believers" (Oppenheim 1977:232).

The category of texts referred to as annals record contemporary events in a systematic manner, generally in the form of a simple list. Annals appear only rarely and rather late in the development of Mesopotamian civilization (Oppenheim 1977:233), and will not be considered in depth here.
The texts that record scholarly data appear early in the development of Mesopotamian civilization and continue to be used until the end. Scholarly texts include dictionaries, mathematical treatises, scientific observations (Crawford 1991:153), records of omens, planetary movements, and specific elements of traditional divination (Oppenheim 1977:233).

Writing was also used to communicate information between people across the country, or on a synchronic level. Synchronic communication is evident in the form of letters between officials, royal edicts, and public announcements (Oppenheim 1977:234). Written records that deal with private and personal affairs also exist; however, they are few in number and limited to specific periods and situations (Oppenheim 1977:234). Although records of a synchronic nature have the potential to illuminate ideological influences on everyday life, the broader context needs to be established before these influences can be correctly evaluated. At present, records of synchronic communication are temporally scattered and lack the context to be interpreted effectively in terms of ideology.

The final subject to be considered here is the ceremonial use of the writing system. This category of texts is perhaps the most directly related to ideology and, as such, most illustrative of the connections between ideology, perception, and the writing system. Ceremonial writing is unique in that it was never intended to be read by anyone other than the gods.
Here belong all those numerous inscriptions from Egypt and Mesopotamia that were never intended to be read by human eyes-or at least were not written for that specific purpose. All the Egyptian mortuary texts, from the Pyramid texts to the Book of the Dead, fall into this category, as do the innumerable foundation documents in cuneiform from Babylonia and Assyria-cones, prisms, barrels, and tablets. None of these texts address living persons...Their primary purpose was to relate the king to his gods in a magic way (Oppenheim 1977: 235).

The context of ceremonial writing, then, is to relate mortals to the gods. The simple fact the writing system was believed to have the power to communicate with the gods suggests that the writing system was imbued with a measure of sacredness.

Each aspect of the written record served the state in subject, but the context is clearly ideological in nature. Because the primary institutions, and the tools necessary to their operation, are necessarily founded on a common perception of the universe, preconceived ideological assumptions provide the context within which each aspect of civilization, and more visibly institutions, is manifested. It is therefore not surprising that the context of the written record that served the institutions of early state level civilizations, especially those where access to the writing system was limited, is closely associated with ideology. This connection, which is clearly visible in the Mesopotamian examples, will also be similarly demonstrated in the Maya civilization. The other well-preserved aspect of Mesopotamian civilization, monumental architecture, also reflects the close connection between ideology and the political and religious structures.
Mesopotamian Monumental Architecture

The monumental constructions present in the sites discussed here share several common features. The sites of Ur, Uruk, Babylon, and Nineveh are all enclosed by walled fortifications that define the defensible space within the city proper. These will be used as the site boundaries when considering the space consumed by monumental construction in relation to the site as a whole. Each of the first three sites listed above also contained areas within the city walls that were distinctly demarcated from the rest of the site, either by walls or mounded areas. Both Ur and Babylon had enclosures within the city walls that contained a concentration of monumental constructions. Uruk also exhibits a concentration of monumental buildings at the center of the site, but these were built on top of mounded areas rather than being enclosed by a second set of walls. Nineveh is the obvious exception to this pattern and as such will be discussed last.

The space consumed by monumental constructions at Ur, Uruk, and Babylon comprises a relatively large portion of the total area within the city walls. In all three cases, the monumental constructions are concentrated at the center of the site. The sacred precinct at Ur occupies nearly one fifth of the total area of the site and is located at the center. The Kullaba and Eanna precincts at Uruk consume only slightly less of the total area of that site and are also situated on a mounded area at the site’s core. The enclosure containing the ziggurat of Marduk at Babylon is central to that site and is larger than any other single area. If the temple and palace areas, which also contain monumental
architecture, are considered in combination with the ziggurat and its environs, the area consumed is larger still.

The proximity of, or spatial relationship between, the buildings also follows a distinct pattern. At each of the first three sites the monumental constructions associated with the religious structure are larger and more centrally positioned than those associated with the administrative apparatus. The ziggurats and their surrounding supporting buildings at Ur, Uruk, and Babylon, are larger and closer to the site center than the palaces, which are usually the second largest buildings or building complexes. The functions of the buildings have been established and discussed at length by numerous authors (Roaf 1990, Woolley 1955 and 1974, Wellard 1972, Oppenheim 1977, Oates 1986, McGuire 1992, Maqueen 1965, Layard 1970, and Bottero, Cassin and Vercoutter 1965) and discussed in the following sections, so they will not be reiterated here.

Finally, the energy invested in monumental constructions can, for our purposes, be most easily understood in terms of relative size. Relative size is a crude indicator, but it is both practical and readily observable from the site maps (Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6). It is also obvious from these Figures that the largest structures are those associated with the religious structure, the political structure, and general public works, in that order.

Nineveh, the obvious exception to the pattern, does evidence the same proportion of monumental architecture to overall area as the other sites and the concentration of monumental buildings is not centrally located. Although there remains much work to be done at the site before a diachronic view of its history can be reconstructed, it is obvious that other factors must be considered if the institutional relationships at the site are to be
understood. The textual evidence suggests that there was a ziggurat in Nineveh at one point, but no material remains have been found to support this yet. However, it should also be noted that most of the remains that have been uncovered so far represent the later periods. Much of the remaining monumental construction was done after Sennacherib moved the Assyrian capital to Nineveh, so evidence from the earlier, formative, period has yet to be uncovered. The fact that monumental architecture, especially that which was religious in nature, played a smaller role in Sennacherib's works projects than it did in earlier periods throughout Mesopotamia, may suggest that religious structures become symbolically less important once a political tradition is established. It also alludes to the fact that religious and political social foundations are less prevalent in societies that lack stability, but this will be considered in the summary and conclusions section.

Ur

The site of Ur is situated halfway between the cities of Baghdad and Basra, and is ten miles west of the current course of the Euphrates. The surrounding area is today mostly uninhabited desert. However, in ancient times, this area supported many thousands of people, to which the existence and size of the city attests. Ur represents the southern-most city of the Ubaid period (4500-3500 BC). Although it now lies some distance from the sea, Quays were found in earlier strata, as well as other evidence that suggests the ocean may once have reached that far north, before silt from the rivers extended the coastline south (Woolley 1955: 20-21, Roaf 1990: 97). The rich alluvial soil was well suited to the agriculture that supported the city and its inhabitants (Lloyd 1943: 48).
Much of the land was irrigated by a series of canals that distributed water from the river, whose course once ran next to the city (Roaf 1990: 97, 101). The city was founded early in the Ubaid period, and was continually occupied until it was abandoned in the 4th century BC. As a result, many levels of occupation are apparent.

The remains of Ur were originally discovered in 1852, but it was not until the following year that the identity of the site was established by J.E. Taylor, then the British Council at Basra. In 1922 systematic excavations were begun by Sir Leonard Woolley. Over the next twelve seasons, under the auspices of the British Museum, the ziggurat and surrounding structures, the royal cemetery, and many other areas were excavated.

Figure 3. Site map of Ur with excavated areas. (after Woolley 1955: fig 6)
As illustrated by Figure 3, the sacred precinct (center), which surrounds the ziggurat, occupies nearly one-fifth of the total area within the city walls. It is, by the definition offered here, a monumental construction. This plan represents the third reconstruction of the sacred precinct and the ziggurat. The first was constructed during the Jamdat Nasr period and razed by an invading army. Evidence of the original construction was excavated by Woolley in the 1920's and early 1930's.

There had been here in the Jamdat Nasr period a ziggurat with its girdle of walled terraces (we found only a fragment of the later, but enough to prove that the ziggurat had existed), but this had been razed to the ground and its mosaic decoration torn down and new buildings erected on a quite different orientation (Woolley 1955: 49).

The second sacred precinct was constructed in the Early Dynastic period by Ur-Nammu, and, significantly, was not rebuilt in the same fashion. Ur-Nammu became the governor of Ur after the king of Erech (also known as Warka and Uruk) conquered the city (Woolley 1955: 120). Seven years later, Ur-Nammu “rebelled against his master and slew him and as the king of the whole land founded the Third Dynasty of Ur” (Woolley 1955: 120). It was immediately following the coronation of Ur-Nammu that the final period of construction projects began. The sequence of construction is established by inscriptions found on the bricks from the fortified walls which enclose the sacred precinct (Woolley 1955: 121).
Two generations after Ur-Nammu's rebuilding of the sacred precinct (figure 4), all but the ziggurat was again razed to the ground by the invading Elamites.

The thoroughness of their destruction is intelligible enough if one glances at the plan [Figure 4] with its huge walls, the flat roofs of the intramural chambers giving plenty of room for the maneuvers of defending troops: for a victorious enemy to dismantle such fortifications was an obvious precaution (Woolley 1955: 138, brackets added).
What Woolley fails to consider in the above quote is the obvious advantage of not destroying the defenses of a city that must then be defended by the invaders who took possession of it. The complete destruction of the sacred precinct must have had another purpose.

Eventually, the Elamite rulers of Ur rebuilt the wall that enclosed the sacred precinct and many of the buildings (Woolley 1955 138). Although the reconstruction differed in style, the Elamite ruler reverted to the “old traditions” and made his daughter High Priestess of Ur (Woolley 1955 138). The different style of construction is consistent with the pattern of conquerors razing important structures that were symbolic of the old patron deity’s power, and then reconstructing them in such a way that the new patron deity’s power was symbolized by it. However, the installation of the Elamite ruler’s daughter as High Priestess, according to the “old tradition”, would seem to suggest that the new ruling faction perceived a need to project the appearance of continuity of tradition. This act may also represent an attempt by the new ruler to legitimize his power by appealing to traditional, or older, belief systems.

Subsequent razing and reconstruction of the sacred precinct also corresponds to a change in the ruling groups. The repetition, at Ur, of this pattern and the number of times it can be demonstrated to have occurred signifies the importance of the symbolism contained in these types of structures. The ziggurat and its attending buildings, the palace and the fortified walls that surrounded the sacred precinct, were repeatedly destroyed and subsequently rebuilt by the various conquerors. The amount of energy expended in the process was enormous, much more than was practically and functionally necessary. Had
the structures themselves not been symbolically important to the conquered population, they would simply have been changed to suit the conquerors’ tastes. Emblems of the ruling groups could have been placed on the walls. Statues of the gods could have been replaced or buildings converted to other uses. Although rebuilding activity could also have been instituted to occupy or discipline the newly conquered city’s population, this does not account for the types of buildings that were razed, or the fact that those same buildings were reconstructed with a minimal degree of variation from the original (when any project that required a large labor pool would have sufficed to occupy the population). The time and energy expended, over and over again, in razing and reconstructing the precinct must have had some practical value, some symbolic practical value.

Uruk

The second Mesopotamian site to be considered is Uruk (Biblical Erech), which was occupied for 5,000 years. The earliest signs of occupation date from the early Ubaid period and the latest from the 3rd century AD. The founding of the cities Ur and Uruk date from the same time period, and evidence many similarities. Although 35 seasons of excavation have uncovered much of Uruk, very little of the information has been published. However, as Figure 4 illustrates, nearly one third of the area inside the city walls was taken up by the sacred precinct.
The ziggurat, as at Ur, was built by Ur-Nammu between 2112 and 2095 BC. It was very similar in design to the one at Ur, but it is unclear as to whether or not it had a predecessor (Roaf 1990: 60). The city walls show evidence of having been razed and reconstructed at least once, attributable to the conquest of the city by Sargon of Akkad, and probably twice (Boehmer 1991: 468-9).
It should also be noted that, after the conquest of Uruk, Sargon instilled his daughter as high-priestess of the city. He also began construction, or possibly reconstruction, projects throughout the city. The data suggest that the pattern of razing and reconstruction is evident at Uruk as well.

Babylon

Babylon, “whose name means the gate of the gods” (Roaf 1990: 192), was the religious and cultural center in later times. It functioned as a provincial capital during the Third Dynasty of Ur and as the “temporal and spiritual capital of southern Mesopotamia” during the 18th century BC (Roaf 1990: 192).

Figure 6: Site plan of Babylon

(after Roaf 1990: 193)
The walls which surrounded the city were one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. According to the Greek historian Herodotus, the outer wall was ten feet high and ten feet wide. The inner wall was twenty feet wide and fifty feet high (Seton 1943: 8; Wellard 1972: 13-14). The combination of the two would seem to provide a more than adequate defense. The circuit of fortification, which was just under ten miles in length, enclosed the city and numerous temples. The six gates which led to the Eastern City were named for the gods. The sixth gate was known as the Processual Way and led through the Ishtar Gate [Figure 7]. The Processual Way is also thought to have been the location of the Hanging Gardens, another wonder of the ancient world (Roaf 1990: 193).
The ziggurat at Babylon, which the book of Genesis calls Babel, was reconstructed by Nabopolassar, the founder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (Wellard 1972: 160). One of the surviving cuneiform texts contains an inscription from Nabopolassar documenting the reconstruction.

...Accepting the council of the gods Shamash, Ada and Marduk, I made decisions and kept them in my heart: I preserved the measurements in my memory, like a treasure. I deposited in the foundations under the bricks gold, silver, and precious stones from the mountains and from the sea. I caused to be made my own royal likeness wearing the dupshikku (?) and placed it in the foundations. For my lord Marduk I bowed my neck. I took off my robe -the sign of my royal blood- and on my head I bore bricks and earth. As for Nebuchadnezzar my first born son, the beloved of my heart. I made him bear the mortar, the offering of wine and oil. in company with my subjects (Wellard 1972: 161).

The above quote illustrates the degree to which the rulers were involved in the construction projects they undertook. The reconstruction of this ziggurat was undertaken during the period when Nabopolassar was consolidating his power. The preceding ziggurat was destroyed 50 years earlier by Sennacherib of Assyria and Nabopolassar’s destroyed 150 years later by Xerxes. This pattern of destruction and reconstruction was repeated many times during the time that Babylon was inhabited (Macqueen 1965; Wellard 1972).

Nineveh

The final site in Mesopotamia to be considered here is Nineveh. Unlike Ur, Uruk, and Babylon, Nineveh was part of Northern Mesopotamia. All evidence suggests that the Northern and Southern regions are two different, yet related, cultures. The Northern, or
Assyrian, tradition developed under “quite different political, social and ethnic pressures” (Oppenheim 1977: 38). Assyria proved much less stable than the Southern region. The Empire was in a constant state of flux, continually expanding and contracting (Oppenheim 1977: 38).

As quickly as Assyria was able, at times, to expand these three directions, as suddenly it could retract to its heartland. In systole and diastole, the Assyrian hub kept the entire Near East in a state of unrest for about a millennium. Where the sources of this dynamism were located we cannot tell (Oppenheim 1977: 40).

Although the Southern region exhibits many changes in rule, there were long periods of stability. In the Northern region these periods of stability were much shorter. Because Nineveh was in a stage of political development that required the strong legitimation of power through religious ideology, as were the cities from the south that were examined, the pattern established in the Southern region should be applicable to the Northern region as well.

Nineveh was occupied from 7,000 BC until it was razed by the Medes and the Babylonians in the summer of 612 BC (Roaf 1990: 186). Although it was not continually the capital of Assyria, it remained an important religious center for the god Ishtar. Even after its destruction as a political center, it remained inhabited for 1,000 years.

The history of excavation at the site spans more than 150 years, but much of it was carried out between 1847 and 1851 by Austen Henry Layard. Unfortunately, it is impossible to reconstruct the site from Layard’s publications or the artifacts he uncovered, as they were removed to the British Museum in a very unsystematic fashion. However, the Iraqi Department of Antiquities resumed work on the site in 1967 and for three years
continued clearing the site of modern debris. Most of the recent data are the result of the efforts of the University of California-Berkeley’s excavations at the site between 1987 and 1990. Most of the site of Nineveh remains unexcavated, but from the archaeological evidence and the cuneiform tablets which Layard took from the library of Ashurbanipal, something of the fall of the city is known.

Although the sacred precinct, as excavated so far, is relatively small in comparison to those of the Southern region, textual evidence suggests that it once contained a large ziggurat (Roaf 1990: 105). Until further excavation provides a more diachronic perspective of the site, further analysis of the earlier periods would be mere speculation.
Much more is known about the city of Nineveh from the later period. Immediately following the designation of Nineveh as the new Assyrian capital, Sennacherib began transforming the city through monumental works. The palace he built reportedly contained a portico with “columns of bronze” resting on bases which were cast in solid bronze in the form of lions and bulls which weighed the equivalent of 43 tons each (Roaf 1990:186). The city wall completes an eight mile circuit which contained 15 gates, most of which were named for the gods (Stronach and Lumsden 1992: 228). Sennacherib also built a stone paved “Royal Road,” that ran from the Nergal Gate to the northeast corner of Kuyunjik (the excavation of which has yet to be completed) (Stronach and Lumsden 1992: 229).

The enormous scale on which Sennacherib built, once the capital of Assyria was moved to Nineveh, would seem to further support the contention that the entire region of Mesopotamia evidences the pattern of destruction and reconstruction which is directly attributable to ideological factors. Although the case of Nineveh does not yet include the destruction of structures which predated this change in the city’s status, this is an example of change in internal rule rather than conquest by an outside group. So there was no need for the consolidation of political power centered around the introduction of a new deity. Because this internal change does not contain the element of religious reconstruction which surrounded the changes in external rule demonstrated in the Southern region, it is obvious that the symbolic element in the pattern is expressed through the religious structure. If it were not, then the transformation of the city of Nineveh undertaken by Sennacherib would have included the destruction and rebuilding of the city’s temple,
which it did not. The temple of Ishtar and the god itself already symbolized the power of Sennacherib, therefore, there was no need to destroy or rebuild the temple.

Mesopotamian Summary

The basic unit of Mesopotamian political structure, in the broadest normative sense, is best characterized as that of autonomous city-states ruled by semi-divine kings who derived their power from the god they represented. The god’s power was founded on a dynamic ideological system that simultaneously created and was created by the interdependent political and religious institutions that formed the basis of Mesopotamian civilization and culture. The power of the god and the king, his earthly representative, was communicated, or materialized, through a variety of different types of objects. These objects which symbolized the king and god’s power, in material terms, were imbued with sacredness through ceremony and ritual. These objects not only served to communicate power but to reinforce the ideology from which that power was derived. The two types of objects that have been considered here, written records and monumental architecture, are examples of both symbolic and material representations of that power.

The written record was understood and used exclusively by the elite class and bureaucracy, in their respective roles as mediators between the populace and the king and through him their god, as a means of communication between the natural and supernatural worlds. The written record was used in the natural realm by the bureaucracy to record the taxes and tribute paid by the king’s subjects to the god, represented by the palace and the
temple. The god’s will was in turn communicated to the commoners through the king’s
decrees and judgments (or law codes). Although written communication between
individuals for private or personal purposes did occur, records of synchronic
communication are relatively few and limited in scope. Ceremonial writing, which was
never intended to be read by anyone of the natural realm, was a means by which the king
recorded his works and deeds and related them to his god. Both the context and subject
of the written record only serves to further reinforce the contention that, not only was the
act of writing considered sacred, but it served as a primary means of communication
between the natural and supernatural realms.

The monumental architecture of Mesopotamia also supports the foundational role
of ideology in early state level societies suggested here. The majority of the monumental
constructions are directly related to, and representative of, the religious and political
institutions. The sacred precincts, palaces, and ceremonial avenues and gates all
symbolize and communicate the gods power in a highly visible, material, fashion.

The space consumed by monumental architecture in proportion to the overall area
enclosed by the city walls is larger than would have been needed to serve any “practical”
function. Furthermore, the areas chosen for monumental construction are nearly always
the most prominent and defensible and, therefore, the most valuable areas within the walls.
The hierarchy of the institutions represented by monumental constructions is reflected in
the pattern that is repeated in the sites examined. The most centralized or prominent areas
of those on which monumental constructions were built, are occupied by architecture
which directly represents, or embodies the religious structure, usually in the form of a
ziggeraut. The constructions most closely associated with the religious structure are, on average, larger and represent a greater energy investment than the slightly smaller structures, such as palaces, that represent the political structure and its associated institutions. The greatest amount of energy and time was invested in the monumental architecture that symbolized, communicated, and materialized the ideology, and its associated institutions, which embodied and reinforced the foundational concepts of the civilization and culture of Mesopotamia.

Two of the most basic and necessary aspects of Mesopotamian civilization, monumental architecture and the written record, both suggest that not only was ideology important, but that it played a fundamental role in the development and maintenance of society as a whole. Because ideology was so central to social motive and intent, and as such to the cultural formation process of the material record, the interpretation of that record must incorporate ideology at the most basic level of analysis in clearly definable and systematic means. Without systematic consideration of ideology, the patterns within the material record of Mesopotamia (such as that of razing and rebuilding) would remain completely unintelligible.
Chapter 3: Mesoamerica

Mesoamerica, as a region or a culture area, has had several different cultures develop within its confines. However, in this study we will only be considering the first civilization to clearly demonstrate a state level of organization. Although several areas within Mesoamerica evidence advanced cultures prior to the development of the Maya, none of these seem to have achieved a state-level society. The Aztec civilization, which did achieve a state-level organization, post-dates the development of the Maya by several centuries and will not be considered here. The Maya are unique in that they were the first in Mesoamerica to develop a state-level society, and as the first the political, and to some extent religious, structures they developed could not have been founded on a tradition other than that which they themselves developed. The fact that this system of organization was developed by the Maya suggests that the data from this civilization provides the least corrupted body of data from which to observe the interaction and development of the relationship between ideology and the political and religious structures. Therefore, although the section titles may suggest that more than one cultural tradition within the region is to be considered, Mesoamerica is intended to refer to a specific area and time frame within the region. It would not be accurate to refer to the data to be considered here simply as Maya because Chichén Itzá, which is predominantly Toltec in composition, will also be considered. Mesoamerica, then, should be understood to refer essentially to the Maya in its broadest interpretation.
The Maya civilization has fascinated the American public since the 1840's when Frederick Catherwood and John Lloyd Stephens began writing about and illustrating the mysterious ruined cities of the Central American rain forests. From more than a century of intensive study the Maya have emerged as having possessed a state-level civilization and culture unrivaled in complexity and area by the other early civilizations of the Americas. The stone temples, palaces, monumental sculptures, and hieroglyphic inscriptions have provided a rich material record from which generations of archaeologists have attempted to reconstruct Maya culture. In combination with the writings of the early Spanish who conquered the region, inscriptions that date back to the 4th and 5th centuries AD, and the comparison and study of living Maya populations, Maya scholars have been able to construct a relatively complete picture of the Classic Maya world.

The term Maya represents a collective of “local cultures and regional societies that evolved together” in southern Mexico and northern Central America (Henderson 1981:13). Though these groups are conventionally grouped together under a single term, it should be noted that there are many differences in the ways in which local groups adapted to the multitude of diverse microenvironments present in the region and the style of material culture through which each is manifest. But the local diversity, that will be elaborated on in later discussions, is accompanied by greater similarities. As the Maya civilization developed into a state level society, the evident similarities became increasingly important. And although the rich material record of Mesoamerica extends into the Paleoindian period, the focus of this section will be on the Late Preclassic through the

66
Early Postclassic, as these periods represent the rise, pinnacle, and decline of extended state level institutions among the Maya.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES (Calibrated)</th>
<th>PERIODS</th>
<th>SOUTHERN AREA</th>
<th>CENTRAL AREA</th>
<th>NORTHERN AREA</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS</th>
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<td>Late Post-</td>
<td>Aztec</td>
<td>Mixco Viejo</td>
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<td>Spanish Conquest</td>
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Since Stephens and Catherwood first described and illustrated the ruined cities of the Maya in *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan* in 1843, many scholars have contributed to our knowledge of the Maya world. Between 1843 and 1923 Maya scholars, or Mayanists, such as Bourbourg, Thomas, Försteman, Maudslay, and Thompson recorded and speculated on the various aspects Maya culture. But it was not until 1923 that the systematic institutionally sponsored projects began. The Carnegie Institution in Washington, the Peabody Museum of Harvard University, and the University of Pennsylvania Museum all carried out projects which incorporated a variety of experts into excavations at individual sites. The institutionally sponsored projects, in general, had access to more resources, new technologies, and professional archaeologists, and as a consequence generated a better quality and depth of data than previous work.
As archaeological theory and research questions have evolved, the importance of regional relationships to the study of Maya culture has grown. In order to understand the development and change of the lowland Maya, the larger cultural setting should be noted.

As early as 1250 BC "large platform constructions, presumably of a public or
politicoreligious nature, [had] appeared in the Olmec region” (Willey 1982: 262) to the west of the Maya heartland. In the valley of Oaxaca similar constructions attest to the “increasing complexity in the social order” (Willey 1982: 262) of the region as a whole. The lowland Maya, who had extensive trading contacts in these other regions, may have borrowed social, political and religious ideologies, as well as some technologies from their more complex neighbors, but appear to remained relatively isolated. By the end of the Middle Preclassic the first signs of increasing social complexity appear in the lowland Maya region in the form of more elaborate temple mounds, most notably at Altar de Sacrificios, Uaxactun, and Tikal (Willey 1982: 262). The increase in social complexity is also indicated by changes in settlement patterns in the Late Preclassic, as noted by Willey.

We know that these were not separate, isolated evolutions. For example, large scale settlement patterns show...major or primary centers, somewhat smaller secondary centers and centers of tertiary size...In effect, there was a vast system that was interlinked in many ways. Political control radiating out of the major centers was undoubtedly one linking mechanism. Although it is unlikely that there was ever a single territorial state in the Maya lowlands, at least in Late Preclassic times (Willey 1982: 262).

Artistic and iconographic analyses of Maya monumental sculptures from the Late Preclassic suggest that they were derived from styles that developed earlier in other regions as well. It is clear that the Maya did not develop in a vacuum, but made use of the variety of models already established by their neighbors. The foundations of Maya civilization were, in general, a synthesis of local and foreign ideas that were incorporated into the growing political, social, and religious structures that eventually resulted in the elaborate material culture associated with the Classic Maya.
Mesoamerican Political Structures

The origins of Maya political structure have recently been the focus of much debate. Prior to 1980 the oldest materials from the Maya lowlands dated to the Middle Formative period and already evidenced a complex political structure (Marcus 1983 460). It was believed, based on the lack of evidence from earlier periods, that the lowland Maya had developed elsewhere and simply been transplanted in the lowlands. However, relatively recent discoveries suggest that the Maya developed in situ (Pearce 1984 59). The available evidence suggests differential access to resources, which implies a social hierarchy, exemplified by grave goods as early as the Middle Formative (800-300 BC) (Marcus 1983 461). The construction of public buildings on platforms at Alter de Sacrificios and Cuello during the same period also suggests that “community leaders” had the ability to “direct manpower” (Marcus 1983 461). Although the Middle Formative period evidences signs of social stratification, the extent of the power invested in any one entity (individual or group) remains unclear. It is not until the Late Formative period (300 BC- 250 AD) that evidence of a political structure that extends beyond an individual site is clear.

Based on a considerable increase in the size of the work force directed by community leaders and the existence of caches in public buildings in the Late Formative Period, Marcus has suggested that a “two-tiered site-size hierarchy” can be detected and that it represents an increasingly complex political structure (1983 461). It is also during
this period that the first monumental architecture appears at several lowland sites. Tikal, El Mirador, Lamanai, Altar de Sacrificios, Cerros, and Cuello all had monumental works constructed during this period (Marcus 1983: 461).

It was not until the Classic period that the Maya political structure reached its full extent. Central-Place Theory, originated by German geographer W. Christaller in 1933, describes the interdependent service functions of hierarchically arranged settlements in a region as hexagonal lattices arranged around a "central place." The Central Place model represents an idealized settlement pattern where environmental and topographic features are not considered. One of the first applications of this theory by American archaeologists was in a study by Wright and Johnson (1975, Johnson 1972, 1973), to interpret prehistoric Near Eastern settlement patterns, and Kent Flannery (1972) who applied the model to Maya settlement patterns. It has since been adapted by Marcus (1976) to explain Maya settlement patterns in terms of political organization during the Classic period. Although there is some debate about the applicability of Central-Place Theory in the case of the Maya, Marcus’ model offers the best interpretation of the available data. Central-Place Theory, as expounded by Marcus (1976), incorporates a four-tiered administrative hierarchy that is determined according to the distance between sites, site size, and the occurrence of emblem glyphs. Marcus also contends that there are two separate levels that must be considered when doing this type of analysis (1976: 25). The first level that must be considered, the cosmological plane, divides the world into four quarters, each of which has a respective capital. This level of analysis is only applicable to the regional capitals and suggests that at any given time there were four of them. Each of the four
major centers was associated with one of the cardinal directions (north, south, east, or west) and a corresponding color (Marcus 1976).

The second level of analysis attempts to explain the nearly equidistant spacing of smaller sites around the larger ones. This spacing suggests that either some ideological phenomenon determined the placement of sites or, more probably, that it was determined by the fact that the smaller sites provided service functions to the larger ones. The constraints placed on a smaller center by the carrying capacity of the land around an administrative center would require optimal spacing in order for the smaller ones to remain near enough to perform their duties (Marcus 1976; 1983). The spacing between administrative sites, excluding the peripheral shifting hamlets, became more regular as Maya society, in general, increased in social complexity (Marcus 1976). This suggests that "sociopolitical factors eventually came to override strictly agricultural ones in determining spacing between major centers." (Marcus 1983 462).

Figure 11. Maya political organization and site spacing (after Marcus 1976: 26)
The administrative hierarchy described by Marcus' Central-Place Theory consists of four types of sites; primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary (Marcus 1976, 1983, Morley and Brainerd 1983 95). The position of a site within an administrative hierarchy can be determined by the presence or absence of specific emblem glyphs. “Capitals mention each others’ emblem glyphs, but not those of secondary centers, secondary centers mention their capital, but not tertiary centers; tertiary centers mention their secondary centers, but do not mention the quaternary centers; and so on down the hierarchy” (Marcus 1976: 24). Using this method the referent glyphs and their accompanying dates suggest that these hierarchical relationships between sites were fluid and changed through time and that allegiance, at any given time, can accurately be determined for those sites where stelae containing emblem glyphs exist.

The model proposed by Marcus (1976) is an idealized model which in reality was extremely dynamic (Marcus 1993). Although the capitals appear to be reasonably stable over long periods of time, the secondary and tertiary centers were apparently more fluid in terms of allegiance and position within the hierarchy The instability at the secondary level is more pronounced and probably associated with some warfare.

I suspect that we will find that most Maya warfare occurred at this secondary center level as a result either of secondary centers jockeying for power among themselves, or of secondary centers fighting to free their province from the regional capital (Marcus 1993: 148).

Within this dynamic model of Maya political structure the most stable unit seems to have been the province (Marcus 1993 120). Regardless of the changing affiliations of the province itself, it seems to have retained its integrity as the basic political unit.
Although exactly where and when Maya society first began increasing in complexity is unknown, it is clear from later evidence that it was based on ideologically justified social contract between the ruling elite and the commoners. Although models of social structure from the Old World have been used as analogies for Maya social structure and political organization, the concepts that underlie Old World models, and the ideological relationships they imply, are more misleading, as noted by Marcus, than helpful in reference to the Maya:

...the Maya lords were not Barons, and their society was not a Western society in which concepts of land ownership and “wealth” were important. Their power was derived not from land, but from a divine right of kingship based on direct links to earlier rulers, whose genealogies were maintained in stone for centuries. Their royal ancestors were supernaturals whose propitiation prevented disaster...Ronald Spores once wrote of the Mixtec, “In return for political, social, and ceremonial leadership, economic security, and protection which were provided by the ruling elites, the citizens of a kingdom were required to pay tribute, to provide labor for the fields and the houses of the rulers, to support the religious cult, and to serve in war” This single, elegant sentence probably describes the Classic Maya better than any model we could borrow from another hemisphere (Marcus 1983: 473).

The Maya political structure was, then, based on the premise that the elites had access to the supernatural world through their ancestors, who could intervene in the ordinary world on their descendant’s behalf. However, this characterization of the Maya elite is only applicable within the boundaries of the administrative hierarchy of each individual political sphere. There was never a single Maya state that covered the lowlands. Each of the major political spheres competed with each other, as evidenced by stelae commemorating the conquest and sacrifice of one ruler by another, but they remained separate entities (Morley and Brainerd 1983 111-115, Willey 1990). There is also evidence to suggest that cities defeated in war were rarely subjugated by the victor
The evidence suggests that it was most common for conquered cities to forfeit some of their lands and labor, and in some cases their history, rather than their independence.

Defeated cities also often evidence a lack of stela erection, monumental construction, and display of their emblem glyphs for some years following their conquest. This phenomenon is best illustrated by the Uaxactun conquest of Tikal in the Late Classic period. For thirty years following its defeat, Tikal “no longer put up monumental constructions, erected stela to its rulers, or displayed its own emblem glyph” (Willey 1990: 5). Conversely, there is a corresponding increase in monumental construction and stela erection in the victorious city (Willey 1990: 4-5). Although it has been suggested wars between cities were ritual in nature, because of the limited scope and intensity, it is more probable that these wars served as a means of broadening a ruler’s power base through the acquisition of resources and labor. Willey has suggested that “the Maya exerted whatever force they could to gain their ends, and these ends were power and control over their neighbors, especially control over agricultural lands and populations to work these and to build the impressive cities for the elite” (1990: 7).

**Mesoamerican Religious Structures**

The Maya worldview was based on a cosmological order that “transcended our distinction between the natural and supernatural realms” (Morley and Brainerd 1983 459). Everything in their environment possessed some form of supernatural power. The
Middleworld, the realm inhabited by humans, was a magical and dangerous place, but it was also seen as a highly ordered in its normal state. Schele and Miller have suggested that it was through the king and his actions that different realms, natural and supernatural, were integrated and kept in order.

For the Maya, the world was a complex and awesome place, alive with sacred power. This power was part of the landscape, of the fabric of space and time, of things both living and inanimate, and of the forces of nature - storms, wind, mist, smoke, rain, earth, sky and water. Sacred beings moved between the three levels of the cosmos: the Overworld which is the heavens, the Middleworld where humans live, and the Underworld or Xibalba, the source of disease and death. The King acted as a transformer through whom, in ritual acts, the unspeakable power of the supernatural passed into the lives of mortal men and their works (Schele and Miller 1986: 301).

The Maya physical world is, then, inextricably intertwined with the supernatural worlds. It was simply one aspect of existence which could not be separated from, or explained without considering, the unity of which it was a part.

Many of aspects of the Maya universe were associated with a deity. The Maya deities were numerous and varied in character. Of the individual deities identified, each was associated with more than one aspect of the universe. It is not uncommon to find a single god as the embodiment of an age, color, direction, profession, strata of society, gender, and activity; such as war or sacrifice (Morley and Brainerd 1983 468; Henderson 1981 72-73, Schele and Miller 1986: 42-44). But no one god occupies anything exclusively, “its denizens constantly move through the space-time continuum” and are fluid and change their associations (Henderson 1981 72).

In order to petition the gods, the Maya performed rituals and ceremonies in which they sacrificed a wide variety of things (including food, goods, blood, and lives), to curry
The purpose of Maya ritual was the “procuring of life, health, and sustenance” (Morley and Brainerd 1983: 480). Perhaps the most important sacrifice made to the gods was blood. Ritual was apparently more than sequenced activity or the symbol of sacred interaction. On Dos Pilas Stela 25 the Maya themselves tell us that ritual, especially bloodletting, gave birth to the gods, bringing them into corporeal existence in human time and space. When dressed in the costumes of different gods, the king was more than just a symbolic stand-in. He was a sacred conduit, a vessel that gave flesh to the god by ritual action (Schele and Miller 1986: 302).

These rituals and ceremonies were the means by which the Maya attempted to influence, or manage, the unseen forces in their world. And as Maya society became more complex, the means by which the gods were petitioned were coopted by the ruling elite.

Later in the Preclassic period, as society became larger and more complex, full-time specialists and leaders became established. In the case of the Maya, the management of unseen forces became a fundamental concern of the ruling elite, both to reinforce and support their elevated status and to ensure prosperity. Because the functions of political and religious leadership seem to have been fused, the Maya order is usually termed a theocracy (Morley and Brainerd 1983: 460-461).

The king served as an intermediary between the gods and his people. And although the priesthood served the daily needs of the temples, performed sacrifices, “controlled calendrical knowledge,” and made prophecies (Marcus 1978: 181-182), the king was the only earthly being that could communicate directly with the gods. In each Maya center, the ruler served as “principal priest” and was responsible for the rituals and ceremonies that ensured the success and well-being of the state (Morley and Brainerd 1983: 461).
The King insured that the heavens would rotate in perpetuity through the rituals of sacrifice and bloodletting. The gifts of blood served both to nourish and sustain the gods and to communicate with them. In this role, the king was the nourisher of the gods, of maize and his people (Schele and Miller 1986: 301).

The ruler served and important function in the Maya view of the universe. He was responsible for placating angry gods, for feeding them with blood sacrifices, and for protecting his people and securing the gods favor for them. He was responsible for insuring that the unseen forces of the Maya world did not destroy his people. The ruler provided his people with something they could not obtain elsewhere, and they, in turn, invested him with power.

The Mesoamerican Written Record

A basic understanding of the Maya written record is an essential element to any discussion of the Maya ideological system and power structure because it represents the only emic primary source from the Classic period. The Maya record spans more than one thousand years and, as of this writing, contains over one thousand decoded or classified glyphs (Marcus 1992: 80) which has facilitated the translation of numerous inscriptions. The comparatively large number of inscriptions from the Classic period that have survived on stone monuments and painted polychrome pottery represent a body of data that has the potential to provide direct insight into the relationship between ideology and political power within Maya society.
The Maya writing system was composed of glyphs which represent a mixture of pictographic, ideographic, logographic, and phonetic elements (Hammond 1988: 298; Marcus 1992: 86; Schele and Freidel 1986: 52-54). These elements were combined in a variety of ways to commemorate special dates, record events and genealogies, and disseminate propaganda (Coe 1993: 195-201, Hammond 1988: 300-301, Marcus 1992: 80-84; Schele and Freidel 50-63). Maya glyphs are found on numerous portable objects, books, and monuments, but of these we will be primarily concerned with the last.

The monuments of the Maya represent one of the best surviving sources of inscriptions. The codices that were not burned by the Spanish conquerors in the 1500's have not preserved well in the tropical environment of Lowland Mesoamerica and many of the more portable objects have found their way into private collections. However, many of the monuments, although suffering somewhat from the ravages of time and conquerors, remain as a testament to Maya construction techniques and political organization.

The Maya constructed a number of different types of inscribed monuments, each with its own characteristic content. "The Classic Maya present us with...[a] complex case, for they had several different types of monuments in use at any one time, and each appears to have featured a specific subject matter" (Marcus 1992: 81). The types of monuments that will be considered here include: (1) Stelae-free standing carved stone monoliths; (2) Lintels—a beam of wood or stone supporting the wall above a doorway; (3) Wall panels—Carved stone slabs set in the wall of a building; (4) Hieroglyphic staircases—a series of inscribed stones set in stairs; (5) Zoomorphic Figures—carved stone sculptures that depict mythical creatures, usually represented in three dimensions and free-standing. Each type
of monument was typically placed in the same types of locations and record similar
categories of events.

Stelae, free-standing carved stone monoliths, were usually erected in areas where
they would be highly visible to a variety of people; such as in plazas or courtyards in front
of public buildings. Stelae are often exceptionally large stone carvings that depict the
rulers who erected them, accompanied by inscriptions that record names, dates, and
recorded "a ruler accession to the throne," significant events during their reign (such as
capturing a noble of another city), the ending of a time period (5 tuns, 10 tuns, 1 katun,
etc.), marriages, conquests, and important religious or political rites performed (Marcus
1992: 81). Stelae were also used to commemorate events retroactively, such as birth
dates, childhood rites, and genealogical information. However, retroactive dates are often
less reliable than dates which commemorated contemporary events for reasons that will be
discussed in later sections.

Lintels, which supported walls above doorways, were usually placed in less visible,
more private, locations. Lintels generally depicted scenes of private ritual or sacrifice by
elites, elite meetings, the taking of sacrificial victims and captives, and the invocation of an
ancestral spirit (Marcus 1992:81-4). Lintels were often placed in palaces or temples
where access was restricted, befitting the more private scenes depicted on them.

Wall panels, like lintels, were placed in areas that were not highly visible. The
content of the inscriptions on wall panels often covers long periods of time in the history
of a city or lineage. They contain long texts that often describe a chronology of events taken from the reigns of numerous rulers.

Hieroglyphic staircases, which are exceptionally large monuments, were placed in public areas and, like wall panels, record chronologies and events that occurred over long periods of time. The inscriptions on hieroglyphic staircases typically record events, rather than genealogies or information specific to individual rulers.

Zoomorphic figures differ from other types of monuments in that they were not inscribed with text, but were intended to convey a message through symbolism alone. Zoomorphs are often three-dimensional depictions of mythical creatures or supernatural beings that may represent "natural forces," such as the earth or the sky (Marcus 1992: 84). These types of monuments were placed in public areas, like stelae and hieroglyphic staircases, and often depict the ruler or an ancestor in the mouth of the creature as a way of symbolically representing "descent from a powerful supernatural" (Marcus 1992:84).

It should be noted, however, that although the written record is a direct reflection of the political system and its relationship to the ideological, it does not necessarily record historical events as they actually transpired. As has previously been discussed, ideology is a dynamic force within social systems. It defines the parameters of what is acceptable within a society and is also used to justify actions which appear to be outside of those parameters. The rulers of any society have the unique ability to reemphasize and recombine specific elements within the ideological system to make unprecedented changes (some of which would have been considered outside the parameters of what was generally considered acceptable) in society as a whole, without having to appeal to elements outside
of the currently held ideology. This is especially true for political leaders that are also identified as the ultimate authority in religious matters as well. And as this type of political/religious dual role, as discussed in previous sections, is present in both the Mesoamerican and Mesopotamian civilizations, it is not surprising that this type of justification for social change is apparent in the written record. Perhaps the most striking example of this type of ideological manipulation is present in the inscriptions recording the accession of Pacal to the throne of Palenque.

As we shall see, Pacal was not the rightful heir to the throne, but was able to claim it and justify his claim through the manipulation of mythological elements within the ideological system. One of the means Pacal chose to reinforce his claim was to have his ideological justification for usurping the throne carved on panels that were part of a monumental construction. Pacal's justification is still visible today in the Temple of the Inscriptions, as well as on the sides of his sarcophagus and the walls of his tomb in mural form (Marcus 1992: 291-293, Schele and Freidel 1990: 217-221).

The Maya written record (as is the case with any historical document) does not necessarily always represent events as they actually happened, but are often simplified versions that best fit the rulers political purposes. The amount of distortion that is introduced into the historical record through this type of political maneuvering, is, at best, variable. The amount of distortion seems to range between Pacal's rewriting of his genealogy to include mythical ancestors and the conquest of Uaxactún by Tikal, which is supported by the several other pieces of evidence (Schele and Freidel 1990: 144-149).
This combination of history, ideology, and political symbolism is a form of
propaganda that was widely used in the Classic Maya world. Joyce Marcus, who has done
extensive work with the Maya written record, has suggested that written propaganda was
used to support or reinforce a rulers actions through appeal to ideology.

Propaganda draws on history, but it simplifies history by focusing attention on
idealized models and stereotypes. Propaganda is more forceful when it is directed and
focused; hence it must reduce the number of facts, events, and details of history.
Mesoamerica's ruling elite had a very selective memory, stressing only those events that
could be used to reinforce the ideology they preferred (Marcus 1992: 11).

We should, however, not lose sight of the fact that in order for propaganda to
serve its intended purpose it must be believable to the intended audience. The intended
audience in this case was the noble class. The inscriptions of the Maya must have been
intended for the elite because the common class was denied knowledge of the writing
system.

Although the Maya developed a writing system, the society as a whole cannot be
considered literate. The use and knowledge of reading and writing was limited to the
noble class. ".. The children of Maya nobles were educated in special schools, where they
were given esoteric knowledge unavailable to commoners. Writing was one of those
esoteric skills, and we have several examples that indicate how strong the association of
hieroglyphs was with the elite" (Marcus 1992: 78). The written word was used not only
to justify political power among elites and record historical events, it was also used as a
means to maintain the boundaries between the noble and common classes. "Literacy was
one of those monopolies that distinguished the ruling class from commoners...the reasons
for this monopoly are easy to find. Mesoamerican rulers also had a monopoly on truth"
The written record, therefore, served not only as a means to convey ideology, history, and propaganda, but its control by the elite class served to further legitimate the relationship of the elite to the common class. But once again, the control of the written word was not the source of the elite class’s power, it was merely one of the means by which class boundaries were maintained and legitimated. The source of the elite class’s power was a direct result of a commonly held ideology that connected the supernatural to the natural world through the ruler and the elite.

The exclusive knowledge and control of the writing system held by the elite simply served as further testament to the divine ancestry invoked by the elite class as justification for their position within the social hierarchy. Because the Maya considered the written word as supernatural in origin and therefore sacred, those who controlled knowledge of it were attributed with a connection to the supernatural world and as the supernatural world and its divine inhabitants were the source of all knowledge and, hence, truth, the power and position of the elite class was justified and legitimated by the ideological system.

It is thus not surprising that sacred powers accrued to those individuals who controlled knowledge of reading, writing, and books. This information was not to be shared, but rather jealously guarded within inegalitarian systems of government. Knowledge was passed from the divine world to the nobles, who, in turn, could interpret and convey to the commoners the necessary message. Since the nobles were descended from the divine and could interact directly with them, they mediated between the commoners and the “givers of knowledge” (Marcus 1992: 28).

If the intended audience of the written record was the elite, and not the commoners as the evidence suggests, then how much distortion would be acceptable? As discussed earlier, in order for propaganda to be effective it must be believable to the intended audience. Therefore, propaganda, as suggested by Marcus in the passage quoted
earlier, must represent some version of actual events. Although “simplified”, “focusing on idealized models and stereotypes”, and reducing the “number of facts, events, and details of history”, written propaganda directed at the elite class had to have drawn on actual events in order to have been believable and thus served its intended purpose.

It should be understood clearly that this argument applies only to inscriptions that record events within the reign of the ruler who commissioned them. It does not apply to inscriptions that record “historical” events that predate a rulers reign, because it has been well established that the Maya manipulated their past to justify their actions (once again, it seems appropriate to cite Pacal as an example). However, if the inscriptions of Maya rulers that refer to events within their reign were directed at a well educated and informed elite class, the events represented could not have been too far removed from actuality without having become obvious falsifications and ineffective for propagandistic purposes. Therefore, it would seem only logical to conclude that although some of the inscriptions that have survived are clearly distorted and unrepresentative of actual historical events, the main body of inscriptions, that commemorate events within a rulers reign, do represent (as much as any historical document from a distant culture can) a reasonable representation of events as they occurred. But having established the inscriptions intended audience, the simple fact that propaganda directed at the elite class existed and was so widely spread throughout the Maya world suggests that it served a universally important purpose within the Maya political structure.

The political symbolism and propaganda contained in the inscriptions from monuments erected by the Maya rulers were intended to increase their prestige and
solidify their positions relative to other elites, lineages, and cities—depending on the period being considered. It is clear, however, that the Maya written record was used by the elite as a means to power.

...Mesoamerican writing was both a tool and a by-product of this competition for prestige and leadership positions...Mesoamerican rulers used hieroglyphic inscriptions not only to identify their vanquished rivals, but also to define the limits of their political territory and the conquered places paying tribute to them...Propaganda was used to help a particular chief or king obtain an important leadership position, hold on to that position, or increase the prestige of his position relative to others (Marcus 1992: 16).

It would seem, then, that competition between rulers was an integral aspect of Maya political structure. The inscriptions of Maya rulers also served as a nonviolent means of recruiting smaller or rival cities into their sphere of political control and as a reminder of other cities positions relative to their own. At primary centers rulers seem to have used public monuments as a medium for propaganda that was intended to coerce smaller centers into aligning themselves or remaining within that centers political control. At smaller centers inscriptions were used as a means to improve that city’s position relative to others under the same primary center’s control:

The Petexbatun evidence illustrates a point already made for the Postclassic by Roys, and confirmed by almost every archaic state we know: the lords of secondary centers are almost always the major source of trouble for primary centers. Just as the batabob in Roys’ Type A provinces were potential threats to undermine the power of the Halach uinic, so were the lords of the secondary centers in the large Classic Maya regional states. Two of the major reasons for the rebellion of secondary centers were probably: (1) a desire to keep the tribute/taxes they collected from tertiary centers, rather than passing it on to the capital; and (2) a wish to utilize their labor forces for their own purposes, rather than someone else’s...Significantly, I see no evidence that major centers, such as Tikal, Palenque, Copan, or Yaxchilan, fought wars against each other (Marcus 1993: 148).
It is only reasonable to assume that propaganda, as well as open warfare, played an important role in the political competition between cities. A illustrative example of this type of competition through propaganda is stela 4 at Uaxactún which was erected by Smoking-Frog who was the ahau of Tikal primarily responsible for the conquest of Uaxactún in AD 378. The fact that he, as a noble of Tikal, erected a stela in a city he had conquered suggests that even after warfare had resolved the dispute between the two cities, monuments, and their propaganda, remained a valuable asset.

It has been suggested by Marcus (1992) that similarities in the content and placement of each type of monument are the result of the functions each was intended to serve. Based on location and access, she has assigned the function of each type of monument to one of two categories: vertical propaganda or horizontal propaganda. Vertical propaganda is “generated by the elite and aimed at influencing the attitude of the commoners below them” (Marcus 1992: 11). Horizontal propaganda “takes place within a group organized on the same level—for example, within the ruling stratum of society rather than between the elite and commoners” (Marcus 1992: 11-12).

However, it seems more plausible that, in accordance with her definition of writing and the evidence that suggests the common class had no knowledge of it, the inscriptions on all these types of monuments, and whatever propaganda was contained within, were intended solely for the elite; or in other words, as horizontal propaganda. Although the inscriptions that appear on public monuments could have been “read” to commoners (Thompson 1972: 5-12; Marcus 1992: 438), Marcus suggests that it was in the process of transmission from noble to commoner that particular “versions” of history were expressed.
However, Marcus seems to feel that much of the vertical propaganda was contained in the text itself. It seems more logical to conclude that any propaganda contained in the text was horizontal in nature (and therefore limited in order to remain believable), and that the vertical propaganda, which by necessity changes in response to changing political circumstances, was limited to the transmission process from noble to commoner.

It is not, therefore, unreasonable to conclude that the amount of propaganda contained in the text of Maya inscriptions is minimal and that monuments built to commemorate contemporary events, such as stelae, are reasonably accurate accounts of actual events as the Maya perceived them. Although some propaganda is apparent in Maya inscriptions, much of it is limited to the justification of extraordinary events and circumstances. Most of the inscriptions, used in conjunction with the material record, to be presented here will be taken from stelae and altars in order to minimize any possible misrepresentations (vertical propaganda) that may be contained within; where exceptions are made they will be noted.

Mesoamerican Monumental Architecture

The monumental architecture of the Maya is elaborate and varied. The buildings at Tikal, Copán, Palenque, and Chichen Itzá are similar in some respects as those of Mesopotamia (location, function, etc.). But because none of the Mayan sites discussed here were enclosed, the distinct site boundaries used to demarcate the extent of Mesopotamian sites are not present. For this reason, the site boundaries will be approximated using the outlying structures as boundary references. The site cores, or
centers, were likewise not enclosed by walls. Rather, each center was built atop or beside
natural features, on artificially raised mounds that represent huge labor investments, that
provided some measure of defensibility. Chichen Itzá is an exception to much of the
pattern established at the other sites and, as such, will be considered last.

The space consumed by monumental architecture at Tikal, Copán, and Palenque is
located at the center of the sites. But because the space available at the site is not limited
by an enclosure, the space consumed by monumental constructions is less important in
Mayan sites. However, this is not true in cases where natural features that are considered
sacred are present at the site, as there is only so much space around then. The lessened
importance of space, however, increases the importance of the other factors, especially the
proximity aspect. Rather than being considered in relation to the available defendable
space, the symbolic element is apparent in the relationship of the structures to each other.

The proximal relationships of monumental buildings at Maya sites, excluding
Chichen Itzá, follow a distinct pattern. As in Mesopotamia, the largest, most central
constructions are those associated with the religious structure. The North Acropolis at
Tikal, where much of the excavation has been concentrated, is one of the largest
constructions, and was renovated several times over the sites occupation (see Figure 13).
The North Acropolis and the Lost World Pyramid, the earliest constructions, are located
on top of “the high ground” at “the site core” (Morley and Brainerd 1983 275). These
two religious structures were later built around, but they represent the importance of
religious ideology during the formative period. The earliest monumental construction at
Copán, the fifth-century temple found beneath the Hieroglyphic Stairway, seems to
suggest the same pattern as that seen at Tikal. The temple is at the core of the site and, though not as large as later constructions, was evidently the first monument built, so it was the largest when it was constructed. Palenque also seems to follow the same pattern. The Temples of the Cross, Foliated Cross, the Sun, and the Temple of Inscriptions are all at the site’s core and are larger than anything save the Palace. The size and location of the Palace may be due to the fact that Palenque was built later than either of the former two sites discussed. And although the monuments associated with the religious structure still dominate the core area, the nature of the Palace may indicate the growing importance of the political structure. It would seem that there is a tendency in the societies discussed toward decreasing importance of the symbolic value of the religious structure to the political structure as time passes. It is possible that as the political structure becomes traditionally entrenched in society, the metaphysical base is slowly replaced by appeals to tradition. This would explain the divergence from the pattern at Nineveh and Chichen Itzá, as well as accounting for the diachronic trends within the other sites discussed.

During the formative periods it is clear that the religious structure is the cornerstone of the political structure, however, as time passes it seems the political structure depends less and less on the religious. This represents a basic change in the societies ideology from a social contract between ruler and ruled from a metaphysical base to a traditional one. This is explored further in the implications section.

here; the designations are clear from most of the building titles on the figures (12, 14, 15). Likewise, the sizes of the buildings are readily apparent from the same scaled figures and have already been discussed in the preceding paragraph on proximal relationships.

Chichen Itzá does not seem to fit the pattern established at the other Maya sites. The central pyramid is dedicated to Kukulcan, a living god rather than an ancestor who was the agent of the gods. And although Chichen Itzá probably represents the work of the Toltec, the Maya princes seem to have figured prominently in the administration of the lands the invaders conquered; so the Maya ideological system was a factor in the society they established. Chichen Itzá experienced the majority of its growth during the Terminal Classic and reflects a mix of Toltec, Maya, and general Mexica characteristics, but it is clear from the evidence that there was an extreme difference in the ideological base of the Itzás. The Toltec had already established their own tradition that they partially transplanted to the Yucatan. The monumental structures at Chichen Itzá reflect the differences in Toltec ideology. The purely religious structures are not centrally located, but are offset to the south of the site core. The monuments located at the center are designated temples, but the Castillo, the platform of the Cones, the Platform of the Eagles, the Temple of Warriors, and the Government Station are all associated more with the military-political structure than they are with the purely religious. The core is symbolic of military might rather than a social contract legitimated by a connection to the supernatural. It would also seem that because the Toltec tradition was already well established in the northern area it had changed from a metaphysical base, the worship of Quetzalcóatl, to a traditional base supported by the military.
Tikal

Tikal, the largest of the Maya centers, has been subject to the most comprehensive study of any Mayan site to date. Originally discovered in 1848, the site covers some 23 square miles and is composed of a variety of types of monumental structures and residential areas (Morley and Brainerd 1983: 272).

Figure 12: Site map of Tikal (after Morley and Brainerd 1983: 273)
Although Tikal was not the first major city founded, it rose quickly in political power to become the first to achieve a state level society and exercise some degree of control over the surrounding areas (Morley and Brainerd 1983: 95, Marcus 1976: 53-74, Weaver 1981: 283-4). The timing of Tikal’s rise to power has been argued by Marcus (1976) on the basis of the sequence of appearance of emblem glyphs at different sites. Emblem glyphs, usually found on commemorative stelae, are symbols that represent a specific site or dynasty. The earliest known of these appears on stela 29 at Tikal and is thought to represent a consolidation of power under a single entity in that city. The date represented on the stela (8.12.14.8.15) is equivalent to 278 AD on the Gregorian Calendar and is accompanied by the tied pouch glyph associated with Tikal (Marcus 1976: 54). It has also been relatively well established that the symbols that compose emblem glyphs contain a literal meaning that can be read. Morley and Brainerd (1983) translate the Tikal emblem glyph to represent the political status or dynastic distinction of the city.

Emblem glyphs are composed of a principal element, or main sign, unique to each site. This main sign is accompanied by affixes, including the “ben-ich” prefix, usually translated as “lord” or “lord of the mat” and by the “water group” prefix, which has been translated as “precious” or “in the line of descent.” The mat has long been recognized as a symbol of the highest political power among the Maya. The meaning of the main sign remains unclear; it may refer either to a dynastic name or title or to actual place names. In either case, the presence and continuity of the emblem glyphs in the lowland texts dealing with the political history of a site may be seen as prima facie evidence that the site in question possessed a state level organization (Morley and Brainerd 1983: 94).

Based on the evidence of emblem glyphs, then, it is not unreasonable to assign Tikal a state level structure at least by the early classic and perhaps earlier. Tikal retained its status as the primary center in the area from sometime before the appearance of the
emblem glyph in 278 AD until the reign of the last well documented ruler, inaugurated in 768, when the Tikal began to decline in importance (Morley and Brainerd 1983 122). By 830 AD, Tikal was beginning to lose its inhabitants, presaging the collapse that was to come (Weaver 1981 298).

Site Chronology: Tikal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preclassic</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 B.C.</td>
<td>Writing is invented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 B.C.</td>
<td>North Acropolis and Stelae</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Classic</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>219 A.D.</td>
<td>8.9.0.0.0</td>
<td>Founding of Tikal dynasty and the reign of Moch-Xoc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>292 A.D.</td>
<td>8.12.14.8.15</td>
<td>Earliest monument at Tikal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>376 A.D.</td>
<td>8.17.0.0.0</td>
<td>Great-Jaguar-Paw ends the Katun at Tikal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>378 A.D.</td>
<td>8.17.1.4.12</td>
<td>Tikal conquerors Uaxactún: first appearence of Tlloc war complex in Maya imagery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>379 A.D.</td>
<td>8.17.2.16.17</td>
<td>Curl-Snout accedes at Tikal under Smoking-Frog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>396 A.D.</td>
<td>8.18.0.0.0</td>
<td>Curl-Snout ends Katun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>411 A.D.</td>
<td>8.18.15.11.0</td>
<td>Astronomically timed “accession event”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>426 A.D.</td>
<td>8.19.10.0.0</td>
<td>Probable accession of Stormy-Sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>439 A.D.</td>
<td>9.0.3.9.18</td>
<td>Last event on stela 31. Stormy-Sky’s bloodletting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>445 A.D.</td>
<td>9.0.10.0.0</td>
<td>Stela 31 dedicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>475 A.D.</td>
<td>9.2.0.0.0</td>
<td>Stela 9 &amp;13, Tikal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>488 A.D.</td>
<td>9.2.13.0.0</td>
<td>Jaguar-Paw Skull, the 14th king. Rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>511 A.D.</td>
<td>9.3.16.18.4</td>
<td>New ruler (name unknown) accedes the throne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>514 A.D.</td>
<td>9.4.0.0.0</td>
<td>Summit of the North Acropolis remodelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>527 A.D.</td>
<td>9.4.13.0.0</td>
<td>Curl Head, the 19th king. rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>537 A.D.</td>
<td>9.5.3.19.15</td>
<td>Double-Bird. the 21st king accedes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>556 A.D.</td>
<td>9.6.2.1.11</td>
<td>Caracol conducts “axe-war” action against Tikal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>557 A.D.</td>
<td>9.6.3.9.15</td>
<td>Last date at Tikal before its conquest by Caracol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>562 A.D.</td>
<td>9.6.8.4.2</td>
<td>Caracol conducts “star-war” against Tikal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Late Classic</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>682 A.D.</td>
<td>9.12.9.17.16</td>
<td>Lintel 3-Temple 1, Tikal Ah-Cacaw accedes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>692 A.D.</td>
<td>9.13.0.0.0</td>
<td>Stela 30, Tikal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>695 A.D.</td>
<td>9.13.3.7.18</td>
<td>Lintel 3-Temple 1, Tikal Ah-Cacaw captures Jaguar-Paw of Calakmul</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

95
695 A.D. 9.13.3.9.18  Lintel 3-Temple 1, Tikal  Ah-Cacaw dedicates Temple 33-1st
695 A.D. 9.13.3.13.15  Sculpture, Temple 5D-57  Tikal captures a noble of Calakmul
711 A.D.  9 14.0.0.0  Stela 14, Tikal  Ah-Cacaw erects stela 14 and builds a
second twin-pyramid group
734 A.D.  9 15.3.6.8  Ah-Cacaw's son, Ruler B, accedes

Terminal Classic

879 A.D. 10.2.0.0.0  Last date at Tikal

Figure 13; Tikal Site Chronology  (compiled from Schele and Freidel 1990)

The architectural features at Tikal include numerous temples, platforms, and
tombs. But the most illustrative example of formative period construction and the role of
ideology is the North Acropolis. Construction on the North Acropolis began in the Late
Preclassic and subsequent restoration and improvement projects continued into the Late
Classic.

Figure 14  Superimposed structures of the North Acropolis  (after Morley and Brainerd 1983 103)
The North Acropolis has been the most extensively excavated area of the Tikal project. It is "essentially a huge platform, measuring 100 by 80 m (330 by 260 ft), comprising numerous rebuildings and expansions, ultimately supporting a symmetrical arrangement of eight funerary temples constructed over a 300-year period (ca. AD 250-550)" (Morley and Brainerd 1983 275). The North Acropolis served as a necropolis for the early rulers of Tikal (Morley and Brainerd 1983 275, Coe 1993 99; Weaver 1981 287) and as a ceremonial center. There is also evidence that at least one of the renovations was done by a later ruler to commemorate the anniversary of the death of an ancestor (Morley and Brainerd 1983 281). The fact that this prominent and central structure was dedicated to past rulers and that renovations on the structure continued into the Late Classic is significant because a ruler's power was based on the power of his ancestors. Therefore, the commemoration and enhancement of the power of an ancestor through monumental construction served to increase and express the power of the ruler adding to the structure. It should also be noted that the North Acropolis represents the earliest evidence of monumental construction at Tikal and is strategically situated on a series of low ridges protected by swampy depressions to the east and west. The position the structure occupies must have been very valuable because of the centrality and the protection the position offered, further illustrating its importance.

Another structure associated with the Late Preclassic is a massive platform just southwest of the North Acropolis referred to as the Lost World Pyramid (structure 5c-54, Figure 13). This structure, also situated in the core area of the site, remained unaffected by later building activity, and was continually maintained throughout the occupation of the
site. It is significant that this structure occupied such an important position within the site and yet remained unaltered through the centuries the site was occupied. The religious nature of the structure and the fact that the ruler was also the high priest suggests that his power was also expressed and tied to the structure, but in a different way than it was to the North Acropolis.

**Palenque**

The second regional capital to be considered here is Palenque. Palenque is located at the foot of the northern-most hills of the Chiapas highlands in the northwest corner of the Maya area (see Figure 10). The layout of the city, once again, evidences the same pattern found at Tikal and Copán (Morley and Brainerd 1983 316-319; Coe 1993 108-115). Palenque, which flourished during the Classic period, was built later than either of the formerly discussed sites, but contains the same types of structures at its core. The most notable of which include the Temple of Inscriptions, the Temple of the Sun, the Temple of the Cross, the Temple of the Foliated Cross, and the Palace.
The Temple Olvidado, Pacal's first project after his parents' death

Group of the Cross, the greatest project of Chan-Bahlum's reign

The Temple of Incriptions, the last building constructed by Pacal

Many of the buildings in the south end of the Palace were built by Pacal after the Temple of the Count

The Temple of the Count, built by Pacal after the Temple Olvidado

Figure 15: Site map of Palenque (after Schele and Freidel 1990: 224)
The Temple of Inscriptions was built soon after the death of Palenque’s greatest ruler, Pacal, who died in 683 AD (Morley and Brainerd 1983 317). It was completed by his son and successor, Chan Bahlum, as a burial place and shrine for Pacal. The Temple itself is some 25 meters high and is composed of rectangular terraced platforms. The tomb of Pacal, found 24 meters beneath the pyramid, was decorated with nine stucco Figures and contained an elaborately carved sarcophagus (Coe 1993 112, 114).

**Site Chronology: Palenque**

**Preclassic**

**Early Classic**

| 431 A.D. | 8.19.15.3.4 | Pacal’s and Chan Bahlum’s King lists | Bahlum-Kuk accedes and founds the dynasty at Palenque. |

**Late Classic**

| 603 | 9.8.9.13.0 | "" | "" | Pacal is born during the reign of Ac-Kan. |
| 612 | 9.8.19.7.18 | "" | "" | Lady Zac-Kuk, Pacal’s mother, accedes. |
| 615 | 9.9.2.4.8 | "" | "" | Pacal accedes the throne of Palenque. |
| 635 | 9.10.2.6.6 | "" | "" | Chan-Bahlum, son of Pacal, is born. |
| 641 | 9.1.8.9.3 | "" | "" | Chan-Bahlum is designated heir to the throne of Palenque. |
| 643 | 9.10.10.1.6 | "" | "" | Kan-Bahlum-Mó, Pacal’s father, dies. |
| 644 | 9.10.11.17.0 | "" | "" | Kan-Xul, brother of Chan-Bahlum, is born. |
| 647 | 9.10.14.5.10 | "" | "" | Pacal dedicates his first temple at Palenque. |
| 652 | 9.11.0.0.0 | "" | "" | Pacal celebrates the period ending. |
| 675 | 9.12.3.6.6 | "" | "" | Pacal begins construction of the Temple of Inscriptions. |
| 683 | 9.12.11.5.18 | "" | "" | Pacal dies. |
| 684 | 9.12.11.12.10 | "" | "" | Chan-Bahlum accedes the throne in a ten-day-long ceremony. |
| 690 | 9.12.18.5.16+ | "" | "" | Chan-Bahlum dedicates the Group of the Cross in a three-day-long ceremony. |
| 702 | 9.13.10.1.5 | "" | "" | Chan-Bahlum dies. |
| 702 | 9.13.10.6.8 | "" | "" | Kan-Xul, the younger brother of Chan-Bahlum accedes the throne of Palenque. |
| 799 | 9.18.9.4.4 | "" | "" | Accession of 6-Cimi-Pacal; the last date at Palenque. |

**Terminal Classic**

Figure 16: Palenque Site Chronology (chronology compiled from Schele and Freidel 1990)
The Temples of the Sun, Cross, and Foliated Cross also date from the reign of Chan Bahlum and contain shrines with sculptured panels that depict Pacal and Chan Bahlum together, as well as a representation of the ruler’s lineage.

The composition of each sculptured panel is similar, depicting the deceased Pacal facing a larger portrait of the new ruler, Chan Bahlum, with both Figures flanked by extensive hieroglyphic texts. Pacal is depicted on the left and Chan Bahlum on the right in two of the panels, with their positions reversed in the Temple of the Foliated Cross. The Temple of the Cross seems to have served as an ancestral shrine for Palenque’s ruling lineage. Its text records the mythological origins of the three patrons of Palenque’s dynasty, the Palenque Triad, and the birth and inauguration of Chan Bahlum and his ancestors (Morley and Brainerd 1983. 318).

Palenque’s largest building complex is the Palace. The Palace is situated on a large 10 meter high platform and was the residence of Palenque’s rulers. The earliest known construction on the Palace is dated to the reign of Pacal.

**Copán**

The same patterns evidenced at Tikal and Palenque are also present at Copán, although excavations to date suggest that the greatest rate of growth and building activity took place during the Classic period (Morley and Brainerd 1983 322-325). Copán, also a regional capital during Classic times, contains platforms, temples, similar to those at Tikal.
Figure 17: Site map of Copán

(after Fash 1991: 155)
Figure 18: Principal Group of Ruins at Copan

(after Fash 1991. 20)
Site Chronology: Copan

Preclassic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150 A.D.</td>
<td>The Kingdom of Copán established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>426</td>
<td>Yax-Kuk-Mô enacts God K-scepter rite and establishes the dynasty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Early Classic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>628</td>
<td>Smoke-Imix-God K accedes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>652</td>
<td>Smoke-Imix-God K celebrates the period ending with a monument at Quirigua and with the pattern of outlying stelae in the Copán valley.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>695</td>
<td>18 Rabbit accedes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Late Classic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>715</td>
<td>18 Rabbit dedicates Temple 22 to celebrate his first katun as king.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>738</td>
<td>18 Rabbit taken captive and sacrificed by Cauac-Sky of Quirigua.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>738</td>
<td>Smoke-Monkey accedes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>749</td>
<td>Smoke-Monkey dies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>749</td>
<td>Smoke-Shell, son of Smoke-Monkey, accedes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>763</td>
<td>Yax-Pac, son of woman of Palenque, accedes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>766</td>
<td>Yax-Pac sets up altar Gj in the Great Plaza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>769</td>
<td>Yax-Pac begins remodeling Temple II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>771</td>
<td>Yax-Pac dedicates Temple 21A to celebrate the period ending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>771</td>
<td>Yax-Pac dedicates the upper temple of structure II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>775</td>
<td>Yax-Pac dedicates Alter Q.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>780</td>
<td>Yax-Pac's younger brother becomes “First Servitor” of the kingdom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>780</td>
<td>Yax-Pac’s “scattering rite.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>781</td>
<td>Yax-Pac dedicates the bench in group 9N-8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>783</td>
<td>Structure 10L-22A, Stela 8 and Alter T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>793</td>
<td>Alter U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>795</td>
<td>Alter in structure 10L-22A (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800</td>
<td>Alter G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>801</td>
<td>Structure 10L-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>802</td>
<td>Alter U</td>
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**Terminal Classic**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>810</td>
<td>Quiriguá, structure 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>820</td>
<td>Stela 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>822</td>
<td>(?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yax-Pac celebrates his first katun as king and includes his younger brother in an inscription on Alter T.

Yax-Pac celebrates his 30th -tun anniversary of accession on the same day his younger brother celebrates his 13th haab as the “First Servitor.”

Yax-Pac places Alter in temple 22A.

Yax-Pac and his brother erect Alter G, in the Great Plaza.

Yax-Pac dedicates temple 18.

Yax-Pac celebrates his two-katun anniversary.

Yax-Pac goes to Quiriguá.

Yax-Pac’s apotheosis is celebrated on stela 11.

U-Cit-Tok accedes and within 5 years the central government collapses.

---

Figure 19: Copan Site Chronology (compiled from Schele and Freidel 1990 and Fash 1991)

Although Copán has not been as extensively excavated as Tikal, it is evident from the available data that the central structures of the site are very similar to those at Tikal. The position of monumental structures at the core of the site, the type of structures, and the functions the structures served, all have many similarities with those at Tikal. The main cluster of buildings, or Acropolis, is composed of repeated constructions overlying earlier buildings, as at the necropolis at Tikal. Unfortunately, although multiple platform surfaces have been exposed by erosion by the river which now cuts into one side of the site, excavations of the earlier constructions that lie beneath the more recent ones have not yet been completed.
The earliest features that have been exposed at Copán, by erosion and exploratory tunneling, date back to the Early Classic period. They consist of a fourth-century marker depicting what appear to be twin gods on glyphic columns and a fifth-century temple.

In the summer of 1992, the long-term project directed by professor William Fash of Northern Illinois University encountered what appears to be Copán's oldest monument, in a deep exploratory tunnel underneath the famous Hieroglyphic Stairway. This seems to be a marker set into the floor sometime in the fourth century AD... and depicts two males facing each other across a central pair of glyph columns. Are these twin gods (we shall come across such later)?... Previous tunneling into the mass supporting the Hieroglyphic Stairway has disclosed a fifth-century temple... while much was destroyed by later building activities, enough has remained of the upper facade to see that it was covered with an enormous crocodile in stucco relief (Coe 1993:87).

These earliest features found to date, a temple and glyphic columns of seemingly religious nature, are both consistent with the types and positions of early building activity seen at Tikal and Palenque.

**Chichen Itzá**

Chichen Itzá is not solely founded on the Maya tradition but rather represents a city built by the Toltec who invaded the Yucatan during the Post-Classic period (Coe 1993:141-142; Weaver 1981:391-400). The decline of the Maya at the end of the Classic period created a vacuum that the Toltec from the north moved to fill. Maya historical sources record the arrival of a man called Kukulcan who founded Chichen Itzá and politically dominated the Yucatan through military force (Coe 1993:142). And although the invading Toltec had conquered the Maya in the region, much of the Maya culture was incorporated into the culture that grew out of Chichen Itzá.
For not only was there a synthesis of styles at Chichen Itzá, but a hybridization of Toltec and Maya religion and society. Jaguar and Eagle knights rub elbows with men in traditional Maya costume and Mexican astral deities coexist with Maya gods. The old Maya order had been overthrown, but it is obvious that many of the native princes were incorporated into the new power structure (Coe 1993: 146).

The differences between the Toltec and Maya cultures are evident in the layout of the city of Chichen Itzá, as well as the types and functions of the structures that occupy the central area of the city. The fact that the ruler, Kukulcan, was worshipped as a god (Coe 1993: 142-145), who had no need to justify his power based on his ancestors, is reflected in the character of the most prominent and central structure of the city, the Castillo. The Castillo is a great large four-sided temple-pyramid which "Landa tells us was dedicated to the cult of Kukulcan" (Coe 1993: 146). The pyramid consists of nine terraces, four stairways (one on each side of the pyramid), and four matching doorways, all of which reflect elements of both Toltec and Maya building styles. It should be noted that the Castillo was not a tomb or a shrine to the rulers ancestors, but the temple of a living god who ruled the city.

Site Chronology: Chichen Itza

Preclassic
100 B.C.

Early Classic

Late Classic

Terminal Classic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Lintel Number</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>867</td>
<td>10.1.17 15.13</td>
<td>The Watering Trough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lintel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>869</td>
<td>10.2.0.1.9</td>
<td>From freize in Casa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Colorada</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing is invented in the Maya area.

The earliest date at Chichen Itza.

Fire ceremony by Yax-Uk-Kauil and another lord of Chichén Itzá; bloodletting by Kakupacal recorded in Casa Colorada.
From frieze in Casa Colorada

Temple of Four Lintels

From the High Priests Grave (temple)

Dedication of Casa Colorada.

Dedication of the Temple of Four Lintels by Yax-T’ul and other lords.

Last date recorded at Chichén Itzá.

Figure 20: Chichen Itza Site Chronology (compiled from Schele and Freidel 1990)

Figure 21. Site map of Chichen Itzá (after Hawkes 1994 248)
Surrounding the Castillo are the Platform of the Eagles, the Platform of the Cones, the Temple of the Warriors, and the Government Station, each of which reflects the importance of the military-based political structure within the society. Unlike Maya centers, the religious structures are not centrally located, but concentrated in an area just south of the city center (see Figure 21).

North of the Castillo, along the sacred way, is the Well of Sacrifice or Sacred Cenote, which was one of the main sources of water for the city and also used as a place of sacrifice, as the name implies. Dredging the cenote produced "jadeite, gold, pottery, human bone, and other items" (Coe 1993 357). It is, at present, uncertain exactly what role the Sacred Cenote played in the society of Chichen Itzá, but the available evidence does suggest that it played some role connected to their ideology. Although many similarities exist between the structures at Chichen Itzá and those at traditional Maya sites, the placement and functions of the central structures reflect the differences in the ideologies of the two cultures.

**Mesoamerican Summary**

The political structure of Mesoamerican civilization (specifically the Maya), although extremely dynamic through time, can be summarized as a collection intensely interactive provinces, represented by their respective centers, ruled by elite lineages whose power was based on a belief that they had access to, and could petition, the supernatural world through their prominent ancestors; who could intervene, or influence events, in the
ordinary or natural world. The Maya kings acted as intermediaries between their people and the gods and served as the principal priests as well as the heads of the political structure. The Maya believed that even the ordinary world, or Middle-world, was populated with all manner of supernatural spirits who routinely effected their daily lives. It was through the king’s contact with the supernatural world that the actions of the malevolent forces were mitigated and their potential ill effects avoided. The right of a ruler to rule was, then, based on the identities of his ancestors. The more powerful one’s forebears, the more legitimate the claim to the throne. It was, therefore, essential for rulers to legitimate their right to rule through the presentation, and often manipulation, of their lineages. One of the principal means by which an individual’s lineage was recorded and presented was through the written record displayed in various forms on monumental architecture.

The written record, which has survived primarily on stone, is complex and composed of a variety of symbolic elements (glyphs, mythical zoomorphic figures, depictions of real individuals, etc.). The different symbolic elements were meant to communicate similar messages to different social strata and the messages they conveyed contained some measure of propaganda. However, regardless of the medium or message, the written record was used primarily to communicate and legitimate an individual’s, and his lineage’s, right to rule by establishing a connection to the supernatural world that was created by the Maya world view, or their ideology.

The monumental architecture of the Maya is similar to its Mesopotamian counterpart in many respects. But the two cultures differ drastically in their motives and
the authority to which they appealed. The Maya rulers built temples and tombs to reinforce and reemphasize their relationships to powerful ancestors who were thought to intervene on behalf of their descendants and the people their descendants ruled. So, although the Maya were motivated by political ends (the reinforcement of their power and influence), the form of that reinforcement was dictated by Maya ideology (in the materialized form of tombs and temples).

The space consumed by Maya monumental architecture is more difficult to relate, in terms of a proportion of the overall area consumed by the site, due to the lack of clearly definable boundaries. However, the monumental architecture considered here is clearly larger and consumes more space than any other single type of construction. The architecture that is most closely related to the religious structure (temples and tombs), and therefore ideology, are comparatively larger than those more closely identified with the political structure. The political and religious structures of the Maya are even more difficult to differentiate than those of Mesopotamia. Structures associated more closely with the political structure are considered here to be monuments to individuals living at the time of construction which record important dates within a reign, or monuments intended to communicate specific messages.

Monumental constructions associated with the religious structure also occupy those areas within a site that are most prominent or defensible, such as naturally elevated features or mounded areas. They also represent a greater energy investment, on average, than other types of projects. As in Mesopotamia, in Mesoamerica the Maya seem to demonstrate a recurring pattern which suggests a hierarchy of institutions that was shared
by many different city-states, which is reflected in the relationships between the monumental structures which represented them. Again, ideology seems to have occupied the pinnacle of the institutional hierarchy. Without proper consideration of ideology at a fundamental level of analysis, many patterns in the archaeological record would remain unrecognizable.
Chapter 4: Summary and Conclusions

The two civilizations that have been considered here, the Mesopotamian and the Mesoamerican, represent cultural traditions that directly effected the broader historical trends within the regions they inhabited. Each of these cultures developed uncannily similar means by which their general populations were motivated, the inequalities of a stratified society justified, and the ideological system that supported their cultures transmitted. These facts suggest that the cross-cultural similarities evidenced by these civilizations may represent a fundamental pattern within human culture, and will be discussed at greater length in the "ideology and culture change" section which follows. It is clear, however, that ideology, and religious and political structures are, in a very practical sense, primarily a means to power, or control of a portion of the societies combined labor, skill, natural resources, and information. That power within a society and the communication of that society power to members of other societies is accomplished through symbolic means, as represented by monumental architecture.

The direction we pursue here is to understand ideology as a source of social power. Social power is the capacity to control and manage the labor and activities of a group to gain access to the benefits of social action. Mann (1986) has identified four sources of power: economic, political, military, and ideological. Throughout history, rulers and chiefs have combined these sources of power in distinct ways to achieve specific goals. The choice of one strategy over another has profound implications for social evolution (Earle 1987, n.d., Johnson and Earle 1987)…Symbols, including icons, rituals, monuments, and written texts, all convey and transmit information and meaning to their viewers…How can an ideology supporting domination be sustained in the presence of an ideology of resistance? The answer, we argue, is grounded in the process by which these ideologies are given concrete, physical form. This process is the materialization of ideology. We argue that ideology is materialized in the form of ceremonies, symbolic objects, monuments, and writing systems to become an effective source of power…Materialization makes it possible to extend an ideology beyond the local group and communicate the power of a central authority to a broader population (DeMarrais, Castillo, and Earle 1996: 15 and 16).
The Maya/Toltec and Sumerian-Babylonian/Akkadian phases of the larger cultural traditions of Mesoamerica and Mesopotamia are merely the best representations that we currently have of the formation of two early state-level societies that developed independently. In the preceding sections these civilizations have been considered in terms of 1) how archaeologists view the political and religious structures of these civilizations given the current database and theoretical paradigm; 2) what various aspects of the written record of each suggests about the most basic level at which ideology influences society and the value placed on ideology by each culture; 3) how closely the attributes of each societies monumental architecture, as outlined in the methodology section, correlate to the evidence derived from the other two sources. In order to better evaluate the declarative value of each aspect of the civilizations reviewed to a general theoretical framework, a cross-cultural comparison of the general attributes is necessary.

The political and religious structures of both the Mesopotamian and Mesoamerican civilizations evidence an inextricable interdependence through which each justifies and legitimates the institutional nature of the other. The Mesopotamian religious structure and belief system inherently supported social stratification as well as imposed specific duties (many of which were ritual actions that were extremely unpleasant by any culture's standards) on the ruler, who was the only individual who could communicate with, and petition, the appropriate deity. The king's political position was justified and legitimated by virtue of his ability to appeal directly to his god, or to a god through his ancestors in the case of the Maya, and through that petition effectively alter events and circumstances within the natural world through supernatural means. The political and religious structure
of the Maya was identical, in the general terms stated above. Each civilization's religious structure differed in form and in the means by which appeal was made to the supernatural world, the Maya through their ancestors and the Mesopotamians through their patron deity, however, the similarities between the two are more striking. The use of ideological constructs, embodied in the religious structure and communicated through monumental architecture, to justify and legitimate the political structure are clearly evident in both examples and seem to suggest a common format.

The written records of each civilization both imply and overtly demonstrate the importance of ideology at every level at which it was employed within the society. Although the forms of the written record are dramatically different and were used in different manners, ideological references in the content and context are strikingly similar. The ends to which the written word was employed in both civilizations are fundamentally the same.

Written documents, such as inscribed stelae or monuments, legal documents, contracts, and stories are physical manifestations of belief systems and, like other means of materialized ideology, may tell a story, legitimate a claim, or transmit a message. While the other means of materialization accomplish this task indirectly through symbols, some texts are explicit and direct (DeMarrais, Castillo, and Earle 1996: 19).

Each civilization used writing as a means of communicating with the supernatural world. In Mesopotamia, ceremonial writing routinely appears on objects and tablets taken from beneath the foundations of building. And in Mesoamerica, ceremonial writing was placed on strips of paper that were ritualistically blood-spattered and burned so the smoke could carry the messages to their ancestors. The written word was also used to maintain
the boundaries between the commoner and elite class of both societies. And although horizontal communication between elites for propagandistic purposes is evident only in the Maya case, the lack of evidence in the Mesopotamian record reflects the different political realities of the two. Each aspect of the content and context of the written record suggests that ideology overtly pervaded the foundations of each societies perceptual construct and, hence, their respective civilizations. The obvious similarities in the two examples and the cross-cultural belief the written word was capable of communicating with the supernatural only serves to further support the importance of ideology and the degree to which it pervaded the most fundamental aspects of these two, and I suspect all, early state-level societies.

The monumental architecture of each civilization also reflects the fundamental role of ideology. The largest investments of space, materials, time, and energy were in monumental constructions that were most closely associated with the religious structure. The sacred precincts at Ur and Uruk, the ziggurat at Babylon, the sacred precinct and ruined ziggurat at Nineveh, the North, South, and Central Acropolises of Tikal, the temples of the Counts, Inscriptions, Cross, Foliated Cross, and the Sun at Palenque, the Principal Group at Copan, and the Castillo and its associated structures at Chichén Itzá all provide clear examples of the importance of ideology, as reflected and materialized in monumental architecture. These types of monuments represent, communicate, and orient an individual in the group, the society, and their universe. “Materialized ideology molds individual beliefs for collective social action. It gives meaning to the external world.
through the tangible, shared forms of ceremonies, symbols, monumental architecture, and writing" (DeMarrais, Castillo, and Earle 1996:16).

In other words, ideology is literally the cornerstone of society. It provides the common perceptual construct need for collective social existence and action.

The problem of including ideology in archaeological theory and analysis has three distinct aspects: 1) the term "ideology" has not been well-defined in terms of anthropological theory; 2) the fundamental level at which ideology effects culture, and culture change, has not been determined in general archaeological terms, but only as it relates to specific patterns within specific databases at a level which is so particularistic as to be relatively useless in a broader context; 3) a general methodology which is primarily dependent on material remains has yet to be suggested. The methodology proposed here, though presented in terms of monumental architecture, can be applied to any category of material remains from which an ideological component can be isolated, or clearly demonstrated for comparative purposes.

In conjunction with the perceived problems of including ideology the three primary objectives of this work have been to 1) establish and illustrate the importance of ideology within a civilization and, as such, in the analysis of the material record created by those civilizations; 2) to determine the appropriate level at which ideology operates within a civilization and culture, so that it can be incorporated at a corresponding level of theory and analysis; 3) to develop and qualitatively evaluate a methodology for including ideology in archaeological theory and analysis.
The importance of ideology within the civilizations considered here is evidenced by the amount of energy, time, and space consumed by the monumental constructions associated with it and the context and content of the written record that expressed it. The political and religious structures, that the majority of the monumental constructions are associated with, served as a primary means of obtaining and maintaining power within those societies. And in this respect these two societies are not unique, as evidenced by DeMarrais, Castillo, and Earl’s study which included the Moche of Peru (1996). “As a whole, the Moche case illustrates the strategic role of an ideology of elite culture and its effectiveness, through materialization [in this case monumental architecture], as a source of power (1996: 27, brackets added). The elite of both civilizations considered here made extensive use of ideology as a means to justify the inequalities between individuals and groups, as evidenced by the both the written record and monumental architecture associated with ideology

The interdependence of the political and religious institutions of both Mesopotamia and Mesoamerica are clearly evident in each of the fundamental aspects of civilization considered here. Because these institutions are so fundamental and represent the means by which societies communicate and reinforce a common ideology, it is essential that any analysis of that society consider the ideological premises on which the culture, and subsequently change within that culture, is founded. Ideology is not only essential to analysis process but must be included at the most fundamental level if we are to gain a more complete understanding of many of the patterns in the material record.
The methodology that was proposed has been to compare attributes within each culture that have been previously established by the written record or by archaeological analysis. The space consumed by the monumental architecture which represents the two institutions most closely associated with ideology, the religious and political, is, on average, proportionally greater than the space consumed by any other type of construction. The monumental constructions are also, in both civilizations, larger and occupy the most prominent and centralized areas of each site. And finally, the amount of energy invested in monumental architecture associated with the religious and political structures, as a function of the other attributes, is greater than any other type of project evidenced by the societies examined. Each of these indicators (function—which is implicit, space consumed, size, relative position within a site, and the amount of energy invested) combine to form a methodological approach that, when applied to these civilizations, suggest and correspond to well-established ideas about the foundational nature and fundamental role of ideology in culture and change.

_Ideology and Cultural Evolution_

One of the most basic problems in the study of ideology is the relationship between the concept, or definition, of it and that of culture. Throughout this work the fundamental nature of ideology has been repeatedly illustrated. However, the relationship between the concepts of ideology and culture must be clarified before proceeding with the discussion
of ideology and cultural evolution. Schele and Freidel have suggested that culture is a way of seeing and understanding the world.

As we grow to adulthood, every human being acquires a special way of seeing and understanding the world and the human community. This is a shared conception of reality, created by the members of a society living together over generations, through their language, their institutions and arts, their experiences, and their common work and play. We call this human phenomenon "culture," and it enables people to understand how and why the world around them works (Schele and Freidel 1990: 64).

This concept of "culture" is not consistent with the popular concept of culture as "learned, shared behavior." The idea that "culture" is somehow an all-inclusive concept is precisely what creates the ambiguity and confusion so often inherent in discussions of ideology. Although a common ideology is learned and shared, it is not in and itself behavior. Because ideology is the foundation on which a society's perceptual construct, as a group, is fashioned, it is the means by which behavior is conceived and justified. This may initially seem an unnecessary distinction, but it is this demarcation that leads to clarification of the role of ideology in culture change. If ideology was dependent on culture, or if ideology was necessarily an extension of behavior, then the variations that exist between individual and groups within a single society could, by definition, not exist. By implication then, ideology, because of its variability, is a construct of the individual which is only relevant to the state, or civilization, when combined with other individual's into a normative negotiated ideology that is accepted by the group. And although it can be influenced, ideology is the one aspect of a civilization that simply cannot be regulated by the state through physical means. Physical means may be employed to influence or change behavior. However, physical means have absolutely no effect on an ideology.
unless the individual or group that holds it allows it to be effected. Therefore, in order for societies to influence the ideology of its member or other societies, an alternative, or state, ideology must be present and reinforced through material symbolic expression.

Because multiple ideas and beliefs exist in a given society, a ruling segment must control the ideology—shared ideas, beliefs, and their representations—that legitimates its position and authority. Giving an ideology concrete, physical form and events, symbolic objects, monuments, and writing systems is instrumental to its institutionalization and extension. The costs of materializing ideology restrict access to this source of power, with the result that through control of key resources a ruling segment may be able to restrict the contexts of use and the transmission of ideas and symbols. (DeMarrais, Castillo, and Earle 1996:31).

The foundation of civilization, or state-level societies, then, is not a common culture (civilizations or states may contain many different cultures—for example the united states in the 20th century), but a common ideology. In order for a state or civilization to remain a single cohesive unit there must exist a common ideology by which individuals and groups identify themselves as members of the larger group with a central political focus. Within a society or civilization it is the elite that have the means necessary to reinforce, through materialization, the ideology must conducive to the interests of the elite, as well as influencing social and cultural change. However, in the cases of both the Mexica and the Inca, presented by Conrad and Demarest (1984), ideology was shown to be an independent variable, that once invoked by the elite could not be sufficiently controlled.

Politically motivated changes in these belief systems created the new ideologies that in turn became both the keys to success and the sources of instability in Aztec and Inca imperialism. Furthermore, the ideological changes restructured the economic systems so that expansion became advantageous for important interest groups and inescapable as state policy. Thus the histories of these Precolumbian empires proved that ideology, however difficult it may be to deal with archaeologically, must be included as a principal variable in analyses of culture change (Conrad and Demarest 1984:205).
The role of ideology in culture change, then, is best described as a dynamic means of conceiving, motivating, and justifying change within a society. Because in order to perceive a need for change, to conceive and alternate possibility, to construct a strategy for bringing the desired change about, and convincing the necessary individuals and groups of the benefits of change, a change in the individuals or groups ideology must occur first. Therefore, any observable change in culture must, by necessity, be accompanied by a corresponding change in ideology, because one informs and effects the other.

In both the Aztec and Inca cases the effects of religious ideology went beyond merely justifying the militaristic and self-interested policies of the elite. The reformed state cults also motivated society while legitimizing the social order, since they generated the active participation of all classes (Conrad and Demarest 1984: 217).

Ideology is the means by which the institutions, that allow for civilizations categorized as "state-level," are created and maintained. Without the common perception of the function a specific institution is to serve, the activity in question cannot be, by definition, institutionalized. And the institutionalization of certain activities within a society is what allows for culture maintenance and change.

The evidence presented in preceding sections also suggests that civilizations may have a common hierarchical structure to which groups and individuals within them may appeal for justification or legitimization. And although a substantial amount of research needs to be done to establish the fact, preliminary indications are that a common religious ideology is necessarily the foundation of all emerging states. The evidence suggests that an institutionalized religion, and the common social perceptual
construct it implies, provides the necessary foundation for the institutions that make civilization or state-level categorization possible. However, as a state evolves and establishes a set of common traditions, the level within the hierarchy to which a successful appeal can be made, changes. The hierarchy of 1) religious ideology, 2) political ideology, 3) economic ideology are apparent in every civilization but are structurally dependent, as authorities to which to appeal, on the order in which they are listed. The religious structure is the most fundamental authority to which an individual or group within a society can appeal for justification or legitimation for the reasons discussed in the preceding paragraphs. Once a religious ideology has been firmly established as the status quo and a political ideology developed and justified by it, appeals to political precedent begin to become successful. Once political ideology becomes embedded in the social conscious and stability and population growth become normalized, the allocation and utilization of resources become more critical and appeals to economic ideology become common and acceptable.

Both Chichen Itzá and Nineveh exhibit characteristics that are not consistent with the regional patterns represented by the sites discussed, but the differences they share are consistent with each other and may be attributed to the fact that these sites were built after the cultures had changed foundational bases from religious to political, as evidenced by the types of buildings that are most prominent.

During times of strife, however, the acceptable authority to which successful appeals could be made returns to the more basic types of ideology as expressed in the hierarchy suggested above.
In times of crisis and social upheaval the ultimate importance of the gods as custodians of the sacrosanct order was certainly more readily perceived than under ordinary circumstances. Social strife heightened the need for an articulation of the inarticulated premises... We must conclude that the protection of the moral order consisted of a social, a religious and a magical component. Human control was limited in its scope and its effects: it relied heavily on the involvement of the gods for its efficacy (Toom 1985: 41 and 54-55).

A good example of this hierarchy in practice is the installation of the Elamite conquerors daughter as high priestess of Ur (as discussed in Chapter 2). After conquering Ur the Elamite ruler reverted to the “old traditions” and made his daughter high priestess of Ur (Woolley 1955 138). The pattern of appeal to older or more fundamental tradition and ideology during periods of transition or social stress is also clear in the Maya civilization. The importance of the calendar in Maya society and the concept of circular time were a means of continually connecting their present to their past. There is evidence that the Maya rulers timed certain action to correspond to specific dates on the calendar that were believed to reinforce and justify their action by associating them, through the calendar and their ideology, to specific events in the past. “Kings legitimized their current actions by asserting that they reiterated ancestral history. Kingly actions were likened to godly actions and exceptions to the norms of legitimate descent were explained as the reenactment of mythological or legendary history” (Schele and Freidel 1990: 84), as in the case of Pacal (described in Chapter 3).

The social situation in the United States today also evidences the same pattern. However, the terms, or language, used by contemporary society to discuss these social aspects differ. Rather than describing the universe in terms of religious beliefs,
contemporary society explains the world in terms of science, which is, by the definition used in this work, simply another form of religious ideology. The belief, or faith, that the unknown will eventually be explainable in scientific terms is no different than the Maya's explanation and faith that the world could be described in terms of their more animistic religion. These are simply two different languages for describing the relationships between the different elements that populate the universe. However, many contemporary societies have developed traditions in which economics has become the primary language of social discourse.

The principal language of our reality here in the West is economics. Important issues in our lives, such as progress and social justice, war and peace, and the hope for prosperity and security, are expressed in material metaphors. Struggles, both moral and military, between the haves and the have-nots of our world pervade our public media and our thoughts of the future (Schele and Freidel 1990: 65).

In contemporary western society, we commonly appeal to science on physical issues, economics on issues related to resource allocation and even morality, but our metaphysical foundation, or the explanation of the unknowable, remains firmly grounded in traditional religious ideology. As a society, we commonly appeal to religious traditions in periods of transition and change in the course of our lives. Events such as birth, marriage, rites of passage, and death are marked by ceremony and ritual which are not associated with science, politics, or economics, but remain, even today, clearly religious in nature. Even in contemporary American society, where a constitutionally mandated separation between church and state is supposed to exist, religious ideology remains deeply embedded in the most basic and fundamental institutions. Everything from
currency to the formal promises made in court to be truthful reflect the foundational nature of religion in the development and maintenance of the state.

Ideology, as presented here, is not merely a story concocted by the ruling faction to legitimize their claim to an unequal portion of the groups resources, although it is commonly used in that manner. Rather, ideology is a collection of beliefs and values that are symbolically represented through materialization and identified with the evolutionary course of a cultural tradition, or civilization, and the institutions that perpetuate it. And although an ideology is not the province of any one particular culture the development of a cohesive ideology is the fundamental requirement that all civilizations must meet if they are to develop the institutions they are defined by. In other words, ideology is the cornerstone of all civilization. Without a common understanding between the individuals within a group and the groups within a society, the basic rules of interaction, or accepted behavioral norms, have no means of definition. Without a common understanding, there can be no cohesion between individuals and, therefore, no group, by definition.

Ideology is, quite simply, the means by which we create the filters through which we perceive the world as individuals and as a group. It is just a fundamental to contemporary society as it was to the ancient civilizations considered in this work not because these societies are somehow dependent, but because of the physical means by which we, as humans, perceive and must categorize the world around us. The categories we ultimately choose to divide our universe may differ, but the process that leads to the need for categorization is inherent in the human condition and accomplished through our ideology.
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