



by James L. Cambias

The Mayan Empire in our own timeline was destroyed during the Spanish conquest of the New World. In the universe of *GURPS Castle Falkenstein*, the Maya were better able to resist the European onslaught, and their kingdom has survived into the Age of Steam as a unique realm of strange customs, powerful magic, and curious "windpunk" technology.

## Geography

The Mayan Empire occupies the entire Yucatan peninsula, and extends south to the Cuchumatanes mountains. It borders Mexico on the west, the Republic of Hidalgo to the south, and the Republic of Honduras to the east.

The terrain of the Yucatan is flat. There are no rivers in the northern part of the peninsula, because all the water flows through underground channels and caverns in the porous limestone rock. Here and there natural sinkholes, called *cenotes*, give access to the water from the surface. Mayan cities grew up around the cenotes, and the Maya became experts at constructing reservoirs and irrigation systems to spread the water.

In the south, the terrain becomes more hilly. The valley of the Usumacinta river cuts through the southern highlands, and is the breadbasket of the Maya. Beyond the river the land rises to the heights of the Cuchumatanes range. The mountains hold veins of copper, gold and silver.

The east coast of the Yucatan is low and swampy, covered by heavy jungle. In the south, there are two large rivers, the Motagua and the Poichic, which flow into the Gulf of Honduras. The jungles are inhabited by Indians related to the Maya, and serve as a buffer between the Empire and the republics of Latin America.

The population of the Mayan Empire is a million and a quarter . . . much larger than any of the other Latin American states except Mexico. Most of the people live either at the northern end of the Yucatan peninsula, in the central hills, or in the Usumacinta valley in the south. The eastern part of the Empire is nearly empty.

## Cities

The capital city of the empire is Mayapan, with a population of about 100,000. Mayapan is by far the biggest city; other cities have populations of 20,000 to 30,000. Important cities of the Empire

include Chichen Itza, Tikal, Palenque, Uxmal, Sayil, Kabah, and Yaxchilan.

Mayapan is an impressive city. Most of its great buildings were built in the past two centuries, and there is a detectable Spanish influence, particularly in the use of the arch, which was unknown in Mayan architecture before 1492. It is not, however, a frequently-visited place. There are only three hotels, but they are quite large and comfortable. The hotels are practically the only places in the whole country where one can find a bed; the Maya prefer to sleep in hammocks.

Sisal is the chief port of the Mayan Empire, and lies on the northern coast of the Yucatan Peninsula. The area around Sisal is mostly farmland, devoted to the production of hemp. The harbor cannot accommodate large modern steamships, so everything must be brought ashore in small boats. Sisal itself is an unimpressive town; the real metropolis of the region is the city of Dzibilchaltun, about 20 miles away. Sisal is connected with Dzibilchaltun by a remarkable wind-powered railway, and plans are afoot to extend the lines all over the country.

## History of the Maya

The ancestors of the Maya entered the Yucatan from Mexico thousands of years ago. Their great civilization developed around A.D. 300, when the first large cities were built. Mayan chronicles of the early period are filled with myth and legend, and it is difficult to tell what really happened.

For example, tradition holds that the city of Uxmal was built in three days by a dwarf magician. Some modern Dwarfs claim this must have been one of their race, exhibiting the legendary craftsmanship for which they are still known. But the fact that the dwarf is described as a magician tends to contradict that theory, and the truth may never be known. Was it perhaps a midget human who was a powerful sorcerer? Or possibly an actual dwarf who somehow retained magical Talent? Or is the whole story just a legend?

The various city-states flourished during the next few centuries, fighting wars with their neighbors and building impressive monuments which still may be seen today. At its height the Mayan civilization extended much further south, encompassing the modern Republic of Hidalgo and the western half of Honduras.

During the Tenth Century, the Maya fell into a decline, and the region was conquered by Toltec followers of Quetzalcoatl who had been driven from Mexico by the invading Aztecs. They established themselves as a ruling class and helped to revitalize the Maya. The Toltecs established their capital at Chichen, and conquered all the surrounding states. Their kingdom flourished for two hundred years before a terrible plague ravaged the entire empire and left the capital depopulated.

Into this power vacuum came a second band of invaders, the Itza. They arrived in 1224 and crossed the thinly-populated center of the peninsula to settle on the east coast, then moved north to occupy the old capital city, which became known as Chichen-Itza. A generation later the Itza founded the city of Mayapan, and forced the other Mayan cities into a unified kingdom in 1283.

Initially the Itza were nothing but rapacious conquerors. Their new capital was stuffed with loot from the other Mayan cities, and the Itza constantly fought wars to gain new booty and slaves. But over the centuries the Maya conquered their conquerors and civilized them.

In 1461, the ruler of the Mayan Empire was Hunac Ceel, a great sorcerer and a thoughtful ruler. His magic brought him premonitions of disaster, and eventually Hunac offered to throw himself into the Sacred Cenote at Chichen Itza in exchange for a prophecy of the future. Attired in elaborate regalia, Hunac jumped. Unlike previous sacrifices, he came out again. The Rain Gods had given him two visions of the future.

In one, the Maya rebelled against the Itza tyranny, the Empire dissolved into civil war, and was conquered by invaders from over the sea. In the second, the Itza accepted their Maya subjects as partners, developed a prosperous nation of traders and farmers, and united to repel the invaders.

It took all of Hunac Ceel's authority and sorcery to convince the nobles of the Empire. He inaugurated great reforms, and allied himself with the old Maya nobles against the other Itza. Hunac died, worn out by his efforts, in 1494, just as word came from traders in Cuba that strangers had arrived from across the sea.

The first Spanish attempt to conquer the Yucatan came in 1527, when Don Francisco de Montejo landed on the island of Cozumel, then crossed to the mainland. Surprisingly swift and organized resistance drove him back to the island, where the Conquistadores looted and demolished the great Temple of Ix Chel. A decade later, Montejo's son made a landing near Campeche, and penetrated as far as the city of Ake before his force was cut off and destroyed.

The Spanish made three other attempts at conquest: a landing near Sisal in 1544, an invasion from Mexico in 1588, and a disastrous attack from Honduras in 1601. Finally in 1617 the Spanish and Maya signed the Treaty of Cozumel, in which the Spanish agreed to end their attacks in exchange for three conditions: that Mayan ports be closed to all but Spanish ships, that missionaries be allowed into the Mayan Empire, and that the Maya make no alliances with Spain's enemies. The treaty was effectively an admission by the Spanish that they couldn't conquer the Mayan Empire, since the Maya had no desire to trade or negotiate with other New Europeans anyway.

## **Mayan Society and Culture**

The Mayan state makes a great effort to remain entirely self-sufficient. Instead of importing foreign goods, the Maya either make things for themselves or do without. A shortage of iron on the peninsula means the Maya have become experts at working stone and making tough ceramics as substitutes. Soldiers in the Mayan army use bullets of baked clay rather than lead.

That being said, the Maya actually do trade quite a bit with their neighbors, particularly the Latin American republics to the south. The Empire's leading export is cotton cloth, dyed in bright colors and woven in intricate patterns. Chocolate is another export, as is salt from the evaporation beds near Campeche. Merchants and traders are generally devotees of Ek Chuah, the Black God. The majority of Mayan seafarers are members of the Chontal tribe. They are excellent seafarers, roving the Gulf and the Caribbean. Much of the Empire's freight moves by water, and several Chontal-owned shipping lines sail to Mexican, Cuban and Texican ports.

Mayan money is based on the gold standard. The coins are minted bearing the image of a cocoa bean. Cocoa was legal tender among the Maya until the early 18th century. Even today, the word for money and the word for chocolate are the same. Merchants in the major cities will freely accept foreign gold and silver coins, but one can exchange paper money only with great difficulty. The Spanish-Jewish Levi family have operated a bank in Sisal for generations, which handles most foreign exchange.

The backbone of the Mayan economy is corn. More varieties of corn are grown within the Empire than in the rest of the world combined. Mayan farmers also raise beans, peppers, squash, tomatoes, coffee and chocolate. Surprisingly, tobacco is not common in the Empire, nor do the Maya smoke or chew. They are, however, addicted to drinking cocoa, which they brew as strong and black as coffee.

A great gift of the Spanish invasion was the introduction of meat animals. Before the Spanish, the chief source of meat among the Maya was dog, and the occasional small deer. Now they raise cattle in the dry central part of the peninsula, and pigs and chickens everywhere. Oxen and mules are widely used as plow animals on Mayan farms. Horses are uncommon, as the Maya remain

awkward horsemen.

All the Maya wear nothing but cotton. They favor sleeveless tunics. The men in the cities and port towns wear European-style trousers, but inland they make do with simple kilts. Despite the hot climate, the Maya are intensely modest; even when out working in the fields they are properly dressed. Shoes, however, are almost unknown. Even the most "Europeanized" dandies of Sisal would never dare to wear something as sissified as a shoe.

All travelers in the Mayan Empire have remarked on the great degree of politeness of the inhabitants, and their serious and restrained demeanor. They are much like stereotypical New England Yankees . . . laconic, a bit pessimistic, but kindly and hospitable.

Each Mayan has two names plus a given name. One surname is matrilineal, passed along the female line of descent; the other is patrilineal, from the father's line. The father's name determines clan affiliation, which is quite important.

One thing which can make the Maya lose all self-restraint is the ball game. This violent team sport is a mainstay of Mayan society. It is played by teams of men wearing heavy stone belts and little else. The game uses a solid rubber ball weighing about twenty pounds. Players can strike it only with their bodies and knees, and score goals by directing the ball through a stone ring. At sacred festivals the winners of the game are selected as sacrificial victims; more commonly it is played for fun and entertainment. Professional ball-players occasionally become rich enough to retire . . . if they survive the injuries sustained during play.

## **Government of the Mayan Empire**

The Mayan Empire is not really an empire at all but a federation of 26 city-states, each with its own hereditary king, or *Halach Uinic*. Before Hunac Ceel's reforms, the more powerful cities dominated their weaker neighbors. Nowadays, the states are all equals, and the ruler of each city-state sends a representative to a council in Mayapan, called the Popol. The position of Emperor is hereditary; the current Aac ("Turtle") dynasty have ruled since 1750.

The Emperor has control over the army and foreign affairs, and can regulate trade within the Empire and abroad. His chief sources of revenue are customs duties and the annual tribute from the cities. The Emperor is also the ruler of Mayapan. His official title is *Ah Pop* . . . "him of the mat," which refers to the ceremonial mat upon which the Emperor sits.

The Popol council votes annually to set the tribute, which is paid by the cities in proportion to their population. The nobles of the council can advise the Emperor on policy, but cannot make laws. All positions in government are limited to the noble class, known as *Almehen* ("persons of known descent").

Otherwise, all government is at the local level. The king of each city makes his own laws and sets his own taxes, with the aid of a council of local nobles. A few cities have their own distinctive governments. Chetumal, over on the east coast, has a democratic assembly much like the system of the ancient Greeks, in which all citizens vote on legislation. Huaymil, on the northwest, has an elected city council, and Chichen Itza is administered by the chief priest of the Rain God.

The ruling class of the Empire are descendants of Itza and Toltecs who conquered the Maya at about the same time the Normans invaded England. Like the Normans, they have become completely assimilated. Careful observers may be able to spot the more Mexican features of the upper classes, and often the rulers have Itza personal and family names.

## **The Royal Family**

The current Mayan Emperor is Yax U Aac ("Green Moon Turtle"), who has been on the throne since 1835. He is the first Mayan ruler to take a foreign wife. The Empress Christiana is a princess of the Swedish royal house. She met the Emperor Yax during his tour of New Europa in 1842, and the two were married a year later. They have five children.

## **Yax U Aac**

Yax U Aac has ruled the Maya since he was only nineteen, and has generally done a good job of it. He has tried to end the traditional isolation of the Mayan Empire by encouraging trade and contact with the nations of America, Antillea and New Europa. The Emperor's tour of New European capitals in 1842 was the first time a Mayan ruler ever left the country. Emperor Yax is fluent in Spanish, English, French and German.

One reason for the Emperor's interest in the outside world is his great love for science. He is a dedicated naturalist during his scarce free time, and has corresponded with Darwin and Huxley. Yax U Aac is also a skilled sorcerer, trained in all the magical traditions of the Maya.

Now in his late seventies, the Emperor Yax is starting to show his age, but is hoping to stay on the throne long enough for his son to gain some responsibility. He is a small man, who sometimes seems to have difficulty carrying the elaborate regalia of his office.

## **Christiana**

The Empress Christiana's life has not been easy. She scandalized her family by agreeing to marry the Mayan Emperor, and since then has lived with the disapproval of many Maya aristocrats. Getting used to the customs of the Mayan court was very difficult, but she is a woman of great courage and determination.

Christiana is now in her fifties, but remains a great beauty. She is tall and fair and dresses in traditional Mayan clothing. The Empress is devoted to her husband and children. Lately she has been the mediator between the Emperor and his eldest son.

## **Tochtli Bernadotte Aac**

Prince Tochtli ("rabbit") is something of a disappointment to his father. The prince is tall, strong and handsome, but is careless and easily manipulated by others. He is an Eagle Knight of the Mayan army, and commands a regiment, but spends nearly all his time playing the ball game or drinking. The Prince has not yet married . . . another source of anxiety for his parents . . . but is notorious for his romantic affairs.

Tochtli has been trained in magic by some of the Mayan Empire's greatest sorcerers, and is a superb ball-player. But he has no interest in the arts of government. The Prince is thirty years old, but rough living and heavy drinking make him look older.

## **The Mayan Army**

Ever since the first Spanish invasions, the Maya have kept a standing army, with universal military service required for all men. During the 18th Century a French exile instructed the Maya in modern forms of military organization and doctrine.

The Mayan army is controlled by three warrior orders, the Eagle Knights, Jaguar Knights and Coyote Knights. They form the officer class, while conscripts and apprentice Knights fill the ranks. Each order has its own regiments, and draw recruits from all over the Empire.

The Eagle Knights are the oldest and most prestigious order. They are also the most stodgy and

traditional. Eagle regiments switched over to firearms only in this century, after a disastrous defeat by Mexican bandits in 1836. The Eagle Knights are much like members of a high-class British regiment . . . brave, undisciplined, and hard-drinking.

Jaguar Knights are less prestigious than the Eagle Knights, but they win more battles. Jaguar regiments are the most professional units in the Mayan army, and pay the most attention to training and doctrine. In battle they are fearless and reliable. Off the field, Jaguar Knights are like Prussians in their stiff reserve and precision.

Coyote Knights are the intellectuals of the Mayan army. Coyote regiments often experiment with new weapons and tactics, and Coyote Knights make up the bulk of the Mayan intelligence service. Many Coyote regiments are technical specialists . . . the engineers, artillery, signal corps and snipers are all Coyote units. Coyote officers are more willing to use psychological warfare, dirty tricks and unorthodox tactics.

The Mayan army has platoons of ten men, commanded by two Knights. Four platoons make up a company, with two more officers in charge. Four companies form a battalion of 200 men, and four battalions make up a regiment. The Mayan army has 13 regiments in all. The Eagle and Jaguar orders each have four infantry regiments and one cavalry regiment, while Coyote order has one infantry, one cavalry and the new Coyote technical regiment, which incorporates an engineer battalion, a signal and intelligence battalion, and two artillery battalions. The cavalry are mostly recruited in the western regions, where the Mexican love of horsemanship has seeped across the border. They are mounted on mules, which survive better in the Yucatan climate.

The army is currently equipped with American-made Springfield rifles sold as surplus at the end of the Civil War. Officers in the Eagle regiments carry old-fashioned war clubs studded with obsidian flakes. Other officers use steel swords and pistols.

During the period of Spanish domination the Maya did not maintain any ships of war, but since their neighbors have become independent the Maya have needed ships to protect their shores. Most of their fleet consists of small sloops and gunboats for coastal defense. They did purchase one steam ironclad, the *Chac*, from a British shipyard in 1870 (the ship was originally commissioned by the Confederacy, but was not finished when the Civil War ended).

## **Foreign Affairs**

For the past few centuries the Maya have had little interest in the world beyond the borders of their empire. Their neighbors the Aztecs were never exactly pleasant people to be near, and for decades all contact with the Spanish came in the form of conquering expeditions. During Spain's heyday, the Mayan Empire was effectively a protectorate, and foreign ships seldom dared to slip past the watchful Spanish patrols.

The Mayan Empire began opening up cautiously to the outside world with the decline of Spanish power, beginning around 1700. Smugglers began to bring in European goods, and with them rumors of interesting ideas . . . astronomy and mathematics to rival the Mayan achievements, useful arts and industries, and tentative offers of friendship from the rulers of mysterious lands called "England" and "France."

But the breakup of Spanish power also brought pirate raids on coastal towns, and new missionaries preaching a variant form of Christianity who were just as bothersome to the Mayan priests as the Spanish Jesuits had been. The Maya saw little reason to end their policy of isolation during the 18th Century, and only a few scholars ventured to Spain and Italy. Many pirates did seek refuge in the swampy eastern part of the Yucatan, and while the government periodically sent in troops to root them out, the pirates did forge ties with the local inhabitants, so that many Maya from that region later went to sea themselves as traders or smugglers.

It was only with the wave of independence movements sweeping Latin America in the wake of the Napoleonic wars that the Maya began opening up to the outside. Instead of haughty and aggressive empires, their new neighbors were mostly small and unstable republics, eager for the trade and military protection the Maya could provide. For the minor states of Central America, the Mayan Empire has been a useful counterweight to the influence of big powers like Mexico, the United States and Great Britain.

During his long reign the present Emperor has tried to encourage contact with other lands to prevent the Mayan Empire from falling too far behind. The technological marvels he saw in New Europa impressed him deeply, as did reports of British and French empire-building in Africa and Asia. To prevent his own land from becoming some colonial power's property, Emperor Yax U Aac has tried to encourage domestic industries, and has cultivated alliances with Brazil and Mexico. His attitude towards the United States is cordial but wary.

## **Religion**

The religion of the Maya is extremely complex, and many large books have been filled by scholars trying to explain Mayan religion to outsiders.

The Maya worship a vast pantheon of 166 gods, but the large number results from the fact that each god has multiple aspects. The most sophisticated theologians among them maintain that all the gods are merely aspects of a single divinity known as Hunab Ku. The following is a list of only the most important Mayan gods:

Itzamna is the chief of the Mayan pantheon, the inventor of writing and the calendar. He is portrayed as an aged man, but is also identified with the alligator. Itzamna and his wife Ix Chel are the parents of all the other Mayan gods.

Ix Chel is the goddess of the rainbow, of healing and of weaving. Medicine among the Maya . . . both scientific and magical . . . is quite advanced. The Empire's greatest medical center is the huge complex surrounding the Temple of Ix Chel, on the island of Cozumel. At the temple there are several large hospitals, a medical school, and libraries holding the accumulated medical lore of the Maya. Ix Chel is depicted as an old woman, sometimes with serpents in her hair.

Ah Kinchil is the Sun god, and at night he transforms into the Jaguar god as he journeys through the underworld. Ah Kinchil has the form of a powerful youth, sometimes with a jaguar mask.

Ix Ch'up is the Moon goddess, who is the consort of Ah Kinchil. She is portrayed as a beautiful maiden. The rabbit is associated with the Moon goddess.

There are four Rain Gods, called Chacs. Each has a different color corresponding to the corners of the world (red for east, white for north, black for west and yellow for south). The cenote at Chichen Itza is sacred to the rain gods. Intriguingly, the Chacs are said to be the ancestors of dwarfs, which live underground.

Besides these chief deities, the Maya honor scores of lesser gods, including Ah Puch, the god of death; Ek Chuah, the god of merchants and chocolate-growers; the heroic twins Xbalanque and Hunahpu; Tohil, the god of fire and change; Hun Hunahpu, the corn god; and many others.

## **Sacrifice**

The Mayan religion, like the extinct Aztec faith, includes blood sacrifice. The practice of killing living humans for their magical power was adopted from the Aztecs, and was almost completely abolished by Hunac Ceel's reforms.

Modern Mayan religion still includes blood offerings to the gods, but nowadays the faithful offer up their own blood willingly and in safe amounts. Animals are also given to the gods, particularly to the Chacs. Their sacrifices are thrown into the sacred well at Chichen Itza.

But the reforms did not completely do away with human sacrifice. Each year a volunteer must leap into the sacred well to appease the Chacs. Amazingly, there are always plenty of volunteers, and would-be sacrifices must often wait several years before they can jump. Stranger still, attempts to drag the cenote to recover bones or treasure have never brought up anything . . . it is as if whatever falls into the sacred well vanishes from the world.

## **Astrology and Astronomy**

Astrology is a very important part of the Mayan religion. Nearly all priests are skilled astrologers, and the sophisticated Mayan calendar was developed as a tool for divination. Priests kept detailed records for centuries of the motions of the planets, and created a superb set of tables for calculating planetary positions.

According to Mayan myth, the universe follows cycles of creation and destruction, each lasting about 5200 years. The Maya believe the last cycle began in 3113 B.C., and that the world will end in A.D. 2011, after which a new creation will make a better universe.

Mayan astrologers also perform a great deal of scientific astronomy. The introduction of the Copernican model of the heavens and Newtonian physics caused a small revolution in Mayan science. Today Mayan astronomers are among the best in the world, with a modern observatory at Jacaltenango in the southern mountains and thousands of years of data to draw upon. Yet, strange as it seems to New European scientists, Mayan astronomers also determine auspicious dates and interpret the signs of the heavens.

## **Other Religions in the Empire**

Over the years, Spanish missionaries did make some converts among the Maya. Today there are some thirteen thousand Catholics in the Mayan Empire, mostly in the western part of the kingdom. There are also a surprising number of Jews in the Mayan Empire, most of them descendants of those expelled from Spain by the Inquisition. Sisal has a colony of nearly a thousand Jews, and Mayapan is home to another thousand.

A small population in the southwest follow the ancient Aztec religion and preserve a remnant of Aztec civilization under the protection of the Mayan Empire. The Aztecs are forbidden to practice death magic but are otherwise free to follow their gods.

## **Mayan Magic**

Mayan magicians are almost all priests and nobles. Midgets and hunchbacks among the Maya often show a great deal of magical talent. The Maya have four great magical books, said to be written by their chief god Itzamna himself. Few sorcerers are permitted to study more than one book.

## **The Codex of the Observatory**

Kept at the great center of astronomy at Jacaltenango, this book holds all the Mayan secrets of astrology and divination. Most of the book is devoted to tables of data on planetary motions. It includes the lore of *Scrying*. By means of astrological calculations, the astronomer-priests can perform *Precognition*, seeing potential future events; and *Retrocognition*, seeing things that happened in the past.



## The Codex of the Sacred Well

Guarded by the priests at the cenote of Chichen Itza, this book contains Mayan magic for promoting fertility of the land and controlling the underground rivers. The Mayan kings all study this book. Sir Richard Burton learned the lore of *Summon the Earthquake* from this text, and the lore of *Shaping the Element* and *Elemental Barrier* are also known to the Druids. Unique to the Codex are the disciplines of *Seeking the Element*, which allows the caster to sense the presence of one of the four magical Elements; and *Create the Element*, which lets the mage generate a volume of one of the Elements out of nothing.

## The Codex of the Hospital

The accumulated knowledge of the temple of Ix Chel on Cozumel Island, this book holds all the Mayan secrets of healing. After the only copy was nearly destroyed by the Spanish invasion, the Maya have placed duplicates in each hospital in their kingdom. The Codex includes much mundane medical knowledge in addition to its magical Lore. The book teaches students how to *Cast Out Illness* and *Ward Off Sickness*, but also how to cause sickness in others. In addition it tells how to *Speed Healing*, which doubles the normal healing rate for injuries.

## The Codex of the Ball-Court

Brought to Yucatan by the Itza, this book includes much magical knowledge from Mexico. Mayan nobles study the lore in this book, which contains mystical knowledge of conditioning the body. Several copies exist, kept by important noble families around the Empire. The book teaches such arts as "Bear Strength," or "Puma Swiftess" . . . all aspects of the lore *Invest With Powers of a Known Form*. A second volume containing secrets of Aztec death-magic was destroyed by order of the Emperor in 1732.

## Thaumic Energy Requirements For New Effects

*Precognition*: 10

*Retrocognition*: 6

*Cast Out Illness*: 10

*Ward Off Illness*: 4

*Speed Healing*: 6

*Seeking the Element*: 4

*Creating the Element*: 8

## Technology

The Mayan Empire has a sophisticated culture with many skilled craftsmen, but suffers from a crippling lack of resources. As a result, Mayan technology is a triumph of making do with primitive materials. Yucatan has no coal deposits (and the petroleum is all off-shore and unknown in the Age of Steam), and very little water power. The forests are scanty, so the chief sources of energy are wind power and muscle. Metals are also scarce, and the lack of fuel for smelting makes them quite expensive, so things like stone and wood are commonly used where New Europeans would employ steel or brass. Mayan technology uses what outsiders would call "primitive" materials and power to achieve sophisticated results.

In *GURPS* terms, the Mayan Empire is mostly TL4, but with some unusual "TL4+1" inventions. Any technology which doesn't require large factories or sources of power, like medicine and the sciences, is TL5. In the poorer sections of the country, the peasants live at TL2 or even below. The army has imported TL5 guns and equipment, but the Emperor is painfully aware that his country's defenses rely on the American republics and New Europa for supply.

An example of Mayan "windpunk" technology is the Sisal Railway, connecting the port of Sisal with the nearby city of Dzibilchaltun. It uses rails of carved stone, carefully fitted together by master stonemasons. The trains themselves are wind-powered. Huge windmills mounted on the locomotive provide the energy needed to drive the train. The locomotive sacrifices speed for pulling power, so the wind railway can only reach 10 miles per hour with a string of three cars. On calm days a team of oxen take over. Other examples of "windtech" abound: in the city of Mayapan the Hotel Yucatan has a windmill on the roof which pumps water for the plumbing system and hauls up the counterweights which operate the elevator. An inventive engineering officer of the Coyote Knights has even devised a windmill-powered repeating catapult which protects the city of Sisal from aerial pirates.

Article publication date: April 27, 2001

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