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## Flux and Stability in Nineteenth-Century Kruso'b Political Organization

### 1. Introduction

The term *kruso'b*, which simply means “the crosses”, is derived from a religious cult.<sup>1</sup> It is frequently used to denote the several thousand speakers of Yucatec Maya who now occupy the central part of the Mexican state of Quintana Roo in the east of the Yucatan peninsula.<sup>2</sup> They are descendants of the rebels who fought against the government of Yucatan in the rebellion that began in 1847. This uprising, known as the “Caste War of Yucatan”, was primarily supported by a section of the Maya-speaking lower class. It was the most significant of the many rural uprisings that unsettled Mexico during the nineteenth century (González Navarro 1976; Reina 1980). After some initial success in 1847/48, the rebels were forced to retreat to the isolated southeastern part of the peninsula, where they established independent polities. The result was a bloody frontier war that continued for more than fifty years. The rebel descendants preserved political autonomy de facto up to the first decades of the twentieth century.

Kruso'b political organization in the second half of the nineteenth century has been characterized in different ways. Some scholars consider it to be a chiefdom (Villa Rojas 1945) or an aggregate of several

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1 I would like to thank Paul Sullivan for his critical comments on an earlier version of this paper.

2 Bartolomé/Barabas (1977: 87) estimated their number to be around 6,000 in 1970. The rebels usually referred to themselves as *cristiano'o'b* (Christians), *otsilo'o'b* (poor), or *masewalo'o'b*. The term *kruso'b* (crosses), in comparison, appears only rarely (For *cristiano'o'b*, *otsilo'o'b*, and *masewalo'o'b* cf. e.g., Proclamation of Juan de la Cruz (Bricker 1981: 188-207); Libro sagrado (Chi Poot 1982: 277-294); Juan de la Cruz, Chan Santa Cruz, February 1, 1850 (Quintal Martín 1992: 68); for *kruso'b* cf. Libro sagrado, March 15, 1903 (Chi Poot 1982: 285); A. Dzul, R. Pec, and A. Chi to governor, January 8, 1888, in R. T. Goldsworthy confidential dispatch, January 26, 1888, Colonial Office, 123/189 (Dumond 1997: 359). Made popular by Reed (1964), however, it is frequently used by scholars and the wider public.

chiefdoms (Dumond 1977), while others see it as a centralized state.<sup>3</sup> I will suggest in the following that, contrary to assuming a consolidated governmental structure, Kruso's political organization should rather be understood as a form of "caudillo politics". This is the analytical framework proposed by Eric Wolf and Edward Hansen (1967). They define "caudillo politics" as: 1. the "emergence of armed patron-client sets, cemented by personal ties of dominance and submission, and by a common desire to obtain wealth by force of arms; 2. the lack of institutionalised means for succession to offices; 3. the use of violence in political competition; and 4. the repeated failures of incumbent leaders to guarantee their tenures as chieftains" (Wolf/Hansen 1967: 169; Riekenberg 1998: 201).<sup>4</sup>

I will attempt to demonstrate the productivity of this approach with a brief discussion on some features of the peculiar form of political organization that developed in the area controlled by the Kruso's after 1850, with particular reference to the role of violence.

## 2. The Beginnings

The Yucatan Caste War, which upset the peninsula after independence from Spain in 1821, was the unexpected outcome of factional disputes between the Yucatecan elites. This opposition between two liberal factions determined political conflict from the end of the 1830s up to the 1850s. The factions were grouped around the politicians Santiago Méndez, representing the interests of the city of Campeche, and Miguel Barbachano acting on behalf of the Mérida elite (Cline 1950, V: 619-622; Betancourt Pérez/Sierra Villarreal 1989: 57-59, 111-113; Negrín Muñoz 1991: 59-62). As elsewhere in Mexico, Yucatan developed a pattern of politics characterized by rapid change of government, frequent coups, and a marked instability of government institutions.

Since political parties with a solid organization and ideology were non-existent, the major political actors – Méndez and Barbachano –

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3 See Rugeley (1997: 495-496); Sapper (1895); Jones (1974: 659); Hostettler (1996: 19); Reed (1997: 523).

4 The role of religion in caudillo political systems was not discussed by Wolf/Hansen (1967). However, its importance in Kruso's political organization is obvious. The hypotheses I suggest here will have to be refuted or confirmed by future studies.

had to rely on multiple chains of vertical political alliances that linked politics at the peninsular, regional, and local levels. This included ties to the Maya-speaking population in the towns and villages of the hinterland, which were mainly secured by the *batabob*, as the caciques or governors of Indian town and village administrations (*repúblicas de indígenas*) were known as in Yucatan.

Since 1839, Ladino<sup>5</sup> leaders had begun to systematically recruit part of the Maya-speaking population as soldiers for the civil wars between the factions of the elite.<sup>6</sup> The character of confrontation changed in 1847, when several groups, composed of members of the Maya-speaking lower classes, began to act independently and fight for their own agenda, which included the reduction of taxes, free access to land, and equal rights. Although many of these rebels were non-Indians (*vecinos*), the uprising that followed has often been characterized as an ethnic or racial war.<sup>7</sup> A critique of this interpretation, however, is not the focus of this paper (Gabbert 1997; 2000; n.d.). I will concentrate instead on the military and political organization that developed in the rebel forces during the decades that followed the outbreak of that war.

Rebel fighting units were modelled initially on the Yucatecan militia. Companies consisted of men from individual towns who were led by elected officers under an elected captain, a position frequently filled by the local *batab* (Jones 1974: 665-666; Rugeley 1995: 486). Nominally they were grouped into larger units under majors (*comandantes*) or generals. In actual fact, however, each company operated independently without a visible command structure (Reed 1964: 122-123; Dumond 1977: 106-107; 1985: 292-293). Coordination at a more inclusive level was achieved only by the more or less stable attachment of individual companies to the few leaders with regional influ-

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5 The term *ladino* is used in other parts of Middle America but not in Yucatan. Nevertheless, it seems more suitable than other terms (e.g., white) to describe the culturally and linguistically hispanicized section of the population, since it contains less phenotypical and genetical connotations inappropriate to Yucatan.

6 See Baqueiro (1990 [1878-1887], I: 228, 230-231, 234, 370); Ancona (1978 [1879/80], IV: 17, 24); Norman (<sup>2</sup>1843: 227); Stephens (1963 [1843], II: 160, 226, 229); Reed (1964: 126).

7 See Buisson (1978: 8, 21-22); Montalvo Ortega (1988: 301, 314); Quintal Martín (1988: 13); Bartolomé (1988: 179).

ence (*caudillos*), such as Jacinto Pat, Cecilio Chi, and Florentino Chan.

In 1849, these overarching command structures collapsed. The rebels were thrown onto the defensive by government forces and within a few months two of their most important chiefs had been killed.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, many of the early *batab* company leaders had died in battle, companies were decimated and, depending on the fortunes of war, survivors joined other units (Reed 1964: 122-123; Rugeley 1995: 486).

Now, a second generation of leaders began to emerge. In addition to their ability to lead their followers on successful pillage raids, some of these rebel caudillos attempted to back up their leadership claims with alleged connections to supernatural forces.<sup>9</sup> This was to be of significance in 1850, when José María Barrera and his men were forced to flee from advancing government troops. Although accounts differ greatly with regard to detail, there is evidence that they established a new settlement around a natural well (*cenote*) that had once allegedly harboured three miraculous crosses with the power of speech. Known as Chan Santa Cruz or “Little Holy Cross”, this place became the centre of a religious cult, attracting hundreds of rebels who began to form villages in the vicinity.<sup>10</sup>

In a desperate situation of near defeat and fragmented forces, the new Cult of the Speaking Cross became a key element in fostering

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8 Cecilio Chi was murdered by his secretary in the spring of 1849, apparently for personal reasons. Jacinto Pat was killed by Venancio Pec in September of the same year as a result of trying to open negotiations with the government (Ancona 1978 [1879/80], IV: 260-264).

9 This seems to have been a frequent phenomenon among caudillos of lower-class background in Latin America (Riekenberg 1998: 204-205).

10 See Manuel Micheltorena to governor, Mérida, April 2, 1851, *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, Mérida, April 7, 1851, p. 1; Ancona (1978 [1879/80], IV: 314-316); Baqueiro (1990 [1878-87], IV: 118-123); Reed (1964: 135-136). Ladino sources generally depict the “Cult of the Speaking Cross” as a trick whereby leaders consciously deceive their followers. This, of course, was standard practice in ideological warfare, and aimed at questioning the legitimacy of the rebel political structure. Whether the rebel leaders were true believers, as Paul Sullivan suggests (personal communication, 6/27/2002; see also Dumond 1997: 420), or not is hard to decide, given the limitations of existing sources. Suffice it to say here that the success of the cult suggests whatever the leaders did or said seems to have carried conviction for their audience and obviously addressed the psychological needs of many of the insurgents.

cohesion among the rebels. It not only gave the rebels an interpretation of their destiny<sup>11</sup> and inspired them with hope for a better future, but also provided inhabitants of different villages and followers of different leaders with a common point of ideological identification.

### 3. Kruso'b political organization – structure or process?

The following decades saw the emergence of a religious, military, and social organization that integrated several local groups. In his now classic book on the Caste War, Nelson Reed (1964: 212), following in the footsteps of Alfonso Villa Rojas (1945: 22-25), developed a diagram of Kruso'b political organization which has had enormous influence on later scholars and the interested public. Under the heading "Cruzob, 1850-1901" it shows, among other things, a three, respectively four-tiered hierarchy of political and religious offices above the common people. The "Patron of the Cross" or *tatich* is placed at the top, the second tier is comprised of the "Interpreter of the Cross" (*tata polin*) and the "General of the Plaza" (*tata chikiuc*), followed by the priests and company officers that form the third tier, while the medicine men (*h-menob*) and village secretaries (*ahdzib huunob*), subordinate to the priests, make up the fourth and last tier. Although schematic representations have their merits, they tend to emphasise structure<sup>12</sup> rather than process and run the risk of suggesting stability even in cases where change has emerged as the outstanding quality of a certain historical development. This seems to be the case with Kruso'b society during the nineteenth century. Reed's schema assumes that:

1. a stable authority structure existed;
2. there was only one ritual centre<sup>13</sup> and the highest religious leader (the Patron of the Cross) was the supreme authority of all Kruso'b;
3. the relative importance of religious and political positions remained fairly constant.

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11 For example, by representing past defeat as a sanction for offending God's orders (see Juan de la Cruz, X-Balam Nah, Xocen, Xcenil, Xocen, December 11, 1850, Villa Rojas 1945: 162).

12 See Reed (1964: 160-161, 209-220) and to a lesser extent, Bartolomé/Barabas (1977: 33-35).

13 Although he himself mentions the centre at Tulum (Reed 1964: 223-224).

A closer look at the sources leads me to doubt all three assumptions.

1. There was apparently no stable political hierarchy in existence to govern the rebel population, but almost constant rivalry between leaders for power and wealth. Thus, one traveller commented at the beginning of the twentieth century:

On the death of a head chief of the Santa Cruz Indians the oldest of the sub-chiefs is supposed to succeed him; as a matter of fact, there are always rival claimants for the chieftainship, and the sub-chief with the strongest personality or greatest popularity amongst the soldiers usually succeeds in grasping the office. There are nearly always rival factions endeavouring to oust the chief in power, and the latter rarely dies in bed (Gann 1924: 49; Adrian 1924: 237).

**Table 1: Causes of Death of Major Rebel Leaders**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Cause of death</b>
Cecilio Chi	early 1849	killed by his secretary
Jacinto Pat	Sept. 1849	killed by rival leader
Manuel Nahuat	3/23/1851	killed in battle
Venancio Pec	spring 1852	killed in battle
Juan Bautista Yam	spring 1852	killed in battle
José María Barrera	Dec. 1852	murdered?
Paulino Pech	May 1853	killed in battle
Agustín Barrera	Dec. 1863	killed by rival leaders
Venancio Puc	Dec. 1863	killed by rival leaders
Apolinario Sánchez	Dec. 1863	killed by rival leaders
Bernardo Ueh	Feb. 1864	killed in battle
Dionisio Zapata	April 1864	killed by rival leaders
Leandro Santos	April 1864	killed by rival leaders
Pedro Tsul	1871	killed in battle
Bonifacio Novelo	July 1874?	unclear
Claudio Novelo	July 1874?	unclear
Bernardino Ken	Oct. 1875	killed in battle
Juan de la Cruz Pat	Oct. 1875	killed in battle
Crescencio Poot	Aug. 1885	killed by rival leader
Juan Bautista Chuc	Aug. 1885	killed by rival leaders
José Crescencio Puc	Sept.? 1894	killed by rival leaders

Name	Date	Cause of death
Román Pec	1896	killed by rival leaders?
José María Aké	early 1897	killed by rival leaders
Hilario Cab	early 1897	killed by rival leaders
José María Canul	early 1897	killed by rival leaders
José María Aguilar	April 1897	killed by rival leaders
Felipe Yama	1899	killed by rival leader
Felipe May	April 1901	killed by rival leader

Sources: *Razón del Pueblo*, Mérida, August 5, 1874, and October 20, 1875, p. 1; Información practicada con Saturnino Fernández et al., Tekax, September 1886, AGEY, Poder Ejecutivo, box 241; Ancona [1879/80] 1978, IV: 80; Sapper (1895: 197); Reed (1964: 109, 121-122, 227, 287-288); Jones (1974: 660, 676-677); Dumond (1985: 295, 301; 1997: 254-256, 381, 395); Angel (1997: 532).

A look at Table 1, showing the causes of death of major Kruso'b leaders, proves that this was not mere sensationalism. Whereas many Kruso'b leaders died in battle, the majority were victims of internal power struggles. This strongly suggests that violence was not an aberration but an inherent feature of Kruso'b politics in the nineteenth century. It was one of several resources potential caudillos could make use of to gain and retain leadership positions. As has already been said, many of the first rebel chiefs were *batabob*, that is, men who could count on some "traditional legitimacy", to adopt a Max Weber term, and wealth to attract followers.<sup>14</sup> The next generation of leaders were all "men of obscure origins", whose success was based on "luck, audacity, military skill, and sheer personal charisma" (Rugeley 1995: 486).<sup>15</sup> Having no significant property or status, these leaders felt a greater need than their predecessors to secure their followers' loyalty with other means. Successful pillaging was initially the only course open to them in order to obtain the wealth to be distributed. The use of physical violence against their enemies, as well as against rivals for leadership or followers who questioned their authority was a neces-

14 Pat, for example, was a personal acquaintance of Barbachano. He was an educated man and owned considerable landed property (Baqueiro 1990 [1878-87], II: 140; Bricker 1981: 98). Pat, Chi and Chan were all *batabob* (Rugeley 1995: 486).

15 José María Barrera, another example, did not play a role in the organization of the rebel forces up to 1850. He does not appear in the correspondence of that time (Jones 1974: 669). Bonifacio Novelo had been a "peddler, agitator, and general ruffraff" before the war (Rugeley 1995: 492-493, note 34).

sary evil in maintaining their position. As Wolf and Hansen pointed out,

the claimants to victory must be prepared to kill their rivals and to demonstrate this willingness publicly. For the loser there is no middle ground; he must submit to the winner, or be killed. [...] Given the terms of competition, violence constitutes a predictable aspect of the system. Leadership can be achieved only through violence; resources claimed only through violence (Wolf/Hansen 1967: 174, 177; Riekenberg 1998: 210-211).

Consequently, leaders required a specific personality or, at least, an assertive image that expressed masculinity and the ready use of violence. This is aptly illustrated in the following description of Bernardino Ken, one of the rebel chiefs in the 1860s and 1870s:

Although he is of advanced age, the strength of his character, his eminent services and sanguinary instincts make him dreadful not only among his followers but even to Poot himself who is also respected and feared as a leader of major rank. In his bacchanals Cen even takes the liberty to kill anybody who gets in his way [...].<sup>16</sup>

The excessive consumption of alcohol has frequently been interpreted as a pathological trait and especially Yucatecan sources depict the rebel leaders as bloodthirsty drunkards.<sup>17</sup> However, heavy drinking may have been an essential component of the social assertion of masculinity in a male-dominated context.

2. The Cult of the Speaking Cross has been frequently been depicted as a unitary movement with a single ritual centre at Chan Santa Cruz in the nineteenth century (Villa Rojas 1945: 22-25; Reed 1964; Bricker 1981). However, Don Dumond (1985: 291; 1997: 421-422) has convincingly argued that not only was there a tendency to fragment politically but also “toward real and profound fission [...] inherent also in the cult”. He has shown that after 1853 several essentially independent and equal religious centres emerged in the Kruso’b area, which drew on separate constituencies. A separate ritual centre existed in the 1850s at Mabén, 40 kilometers north-east of

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16 “La Guerra de Castas”, *La Razón del Pueblo*, Mérida, March 29, 1871, p. 2; see also Antonio Espinosa to governor, Valladolid, February 28, 1871, *La Razón del Pueblo*, Mérida, March 1, 1871, p. 1.

17 See, for example, “Comisión del gobierno de Yucatán [...]”, Mérida, June 13, 1864, *La Nueva Época*, Mérida, June 24, 1864, p. 2.



Valladolid, which was shifted to Kantunilkin in 1858 as a result of frequent army attacks. Other ritual centres emerged at Tulum in 1864, at Muyil in the early 1870s and, possibly at Chunpom around the same time or later. All of these places had a church with several crosses, as well as a number of barracks where men from the villages attached lived during their periodic guard services (*guardia*).<sup>18</sup> The sources also indicate that “Patron of the Cross” was not a unique title but one held by individuals in the ritual centres mentioned (Miller 1889: 26; Dumond 1985: 296-297, 300-301; 1997: 317-319, 371).

There is, in fact, a hierarchy of crosses in the Kruso’b religious system. Patron crosses (also called saints) are seen as intermediaries between God and man, while domestic crosses are held to protect the elementary family. Some domestic crosses gain prestige by virtue of their exceptional powers and become the patron of all families belonging to a patrilineage. The lineage cross, which is ascribed the greatest power, becomes the patron cross of the village and is kept in the village church. Finally, a village cross can acquire such regional importance that homage is widely paid and guard service performed (Miller 1889: 26; Villa Rojas 1945: 97-98; Dumond 1985: 295). It seems obvious that a potential for fragmentation lies within such a system, since crosses differ not in kind but in their degree of supernatural power, of which there may be conflicting evaluations. As Don Dumond puts it:

As the quasi-military company was the building block of the segmental political organization, so it was also the unit of worship and *guardia* in the religion of the oracular crosses. And thus it is no surprise to find that the periodic fragmentation of political rule was accompanied inevitably by fragmentation of the religious organization, or that regional splinters within the religious cult became the separatist centers of diverging politics (Dumond 1985: 303).

3. It appears that the relationship between religious and secular power was by no means stable.<sup>19</sup> While José María Barrera, who is generally seen as the founder of the cult, succeeded in attracting nu-

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18 All male Kruso’b who were married or over sixteen years of age were required to guard the major military and cult centres for fixed terms (Villa Rojas 1945: 24; Sullivan 1997, II: 3).

19 This point has been already stressed by Jones (1974) and Dumond (1977, especially p. 126).

merous followers, it is still not clear whether he was also able to establish unchallenged political authority over the rebels.<sup>20</sup> An early sermon of the Speaking Cross that survived in written form complained about the disobedience of many military leaders and can be interpreted as an indication of factional conflict: “[...] there are very few generals that come because none of the generals believe in any of my ordinances and the generals say that there is no truth whatever in my orders [...]”.<sup>21</sup>

Barrera died in 1852 and there is a great dearth of information on the rebel politics of the years that followed. It does, however, seem to be clear that Venancio Puc established himself as the highest religious and military leader in 1857 or earlier. His claim to political supremacy was thus backed by his religious authority.<sup>22</sup> However, this state of affairs only lasted until December 1863, when Puc was killed by two of his generals (Dionisio Zapata and Leandro Santos). They not only questioned Puc’s political position but also his charismatic authority as Patron of the Cross and, apparently, also several aspects of the cult itself.<sup>23</sup> After a further coup only four months later, authority was more or less evenly shared by three leaders. According to a report by a British visitor, one of them (Bonifacio Novelo) acted as the “head of the church” while his fellow leaders (Crescencio Poot and Bernardino Ken) were mainly concerned with military affairs.<sup>24</sup> Poot probably became supreme in late 1868.<sup>25</sup> According to Jones (1974: 677-678) and Dumond (1977: 125-126; 1985: 299), the cult and its priests lost

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20 But see Jones (1974: 676).

21 Juan de la Cruz, X-Balam Nah, Xocen, Xcenil, Xocen, December 11, 1850, Villa Rojas (1945: 162). Jones (1974: 668-669) has already made this point.

22 See, for example, Aldherre (1869: 75); Jones (1974: 670-674). Puc did also participate in military expeditions (e.g. Jones 1974: 672; Dumond 1997: 221, 252, 259).

23 See, for example, Angel Dugall to Pantaleon Barrera, Corozal, n.d. [the document is dated “15 del pasado” and although the year is not mentioned, the letter’s content suggests that it was written in 1864], CAIHDY, XLIV-1850-1859, 004; Jones (1974: 675); Dumond (1985: 298; 1997: 254-256, 258).

24 See John Carmichael to Longdon, Corozal, November 15, 1867, Archives of Belize (Belmopan), Record 96, printed in Rugeley (2001: 82-87); Jones (1974: 676-677).

25 The reason for this development is not clear. According to Dumond (1997: 303), Novelo’s name never cropped up in an active context again in the documents. See also Bricker (1981: 112, 339, note 58).

much of their political influence the patron of the cross at Chan Santa Cruz no longer gave secular orders, and administration was almost fully secularized. They suggest that civil-military leadership became separated from the ritual leadership.<sup>26</sup> By comparison, Paul Sullivan (personal communication, 6/27/2002) argues for the continuity of the cult and its forms, as well as its role in Kruso'b society. He rightly stresses that the cult did not completely lose its political significance and that military leaders remained true believers.<sup>27</sup> Villa Roja's description of Kruso'b society in the 1930s supports to a certain extent both points of view. On one hand, it differentiates between the ritual and political roles in office and, on the other hand, makes clear that this separation was, however, far from complete since the ritual leader continued to play a role in secular matters (1945: 72, 92-93). It is impossible to resolve this point here. However, I would argue that although Kruso'b politics did not become an entirely secular affair, there are clear indications that the relation between and the relative importance of religious and political positions changed over time. Whereas some leaders held the uppermost ritual and political positions simultaneously (e.g., Venancio Puc), they were held by different people in other periods (e.g., Novelo and Poot between 1864 and 1868). Furthermore, while all important leaders lived in Chan Santa Cruz for many years, there were no permanent residents there from the 1880s onwards, as the Kruso'b and their leaders lived dispersed throughout the surrounding villages.<sup>28</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

Leadership positions among the Kruso'b were mainly based on personal loyalty and face-to-face relationships. I agree, therefore, with Don Dumond (1985: 302) that "the ability of the political leaders to unify their followers was sharply limited in both the number of people they could organize and the size of the area they could dominate".

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26 The supremacy of the religious leaders in Tulum persisted up to 1892, when the inhabitants vacated the place (Jones 1974: 678; Dumond 1985: 301-302, 369).

27 In fact, an anonymous report mentions Poot as the "Governor" or "First General", who "communicates directly with the 'Cross'" (Anonymous to Guillermo Palomino, n.l., [1873?], printed in Rugeley 2001: 95).

28 See "Anonymous Report on Rebel Military Capacity", 1878, printed in Rugeley (2001: 88); Miller (1889: 25, 27); Dumond (1977: 125).

Since the economic foundations of domination were weak – leaders, for example, did not control the basic means of production such as land – and the importance of war as a potential foundation for social and political hierarchy fell into decline, no stable centralized form of political organization could be established.<sup>29</sup> Political organization above the local level was based on a number of competing leaders who managed to rise to regional importance and become caudillos as a result of their capacity to conduct raids on Yucatan and organize supplies from Belize, as well as on their military prowess, masculine (*machista*) performance and, possibly, rhetorical abilities. In many cases, although not all, these qualities were combined with a charisma gained by being considered especially close to the holy cross (or crosses).

Although the ability of individual caudillos to consolidate their power may have been limited, the entire system, based on military organization in companies and the religious cult, worked quite well for several decades and allowed the Kruso'b to defend themselves against the Yucatecans for more than fifty years.<sup>30</sup> I do not agree with Dumond (1985: 302-303) that this was “a reflection more of Yucatecan weakness”, but would argue that to a significant extent it was the result of a highly effective military organization capable of motivating warriors to fight, the ability to procure the necessary supplies in a society with relatively few resources, and the development of specific forms of warfare (guerrilla tactics, ambushes, etc.) that even allowed a triumph over the superior Yucatecan forces. Although Kruso'b political and religious organization was far from static, as Dumond (1985; 1997) and Jones (1974) have argued, and as I have attempted to demonstrate in this paper, and although their leaders were overthrown from time to time, there was an impressive continuity in many cult-related religious practices. Although the cult contained the potential for both religious and social fragmentation into various sub-units, at the same time it provided the basis for social cohesion beyond the levels of kinship and locality.

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29 I plan to discuss the political economy of Kruso'b political organization in a future article.

30 Thanks to Paul Sullivan (personal communication, 6/27/2002) for raising this point.

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