

Península de navegantes

Miradas a la historia marítima de Yucatán



GOBIERNO DE
MÉXICO

CULTURA
SECRETARÍA DE CULTURA

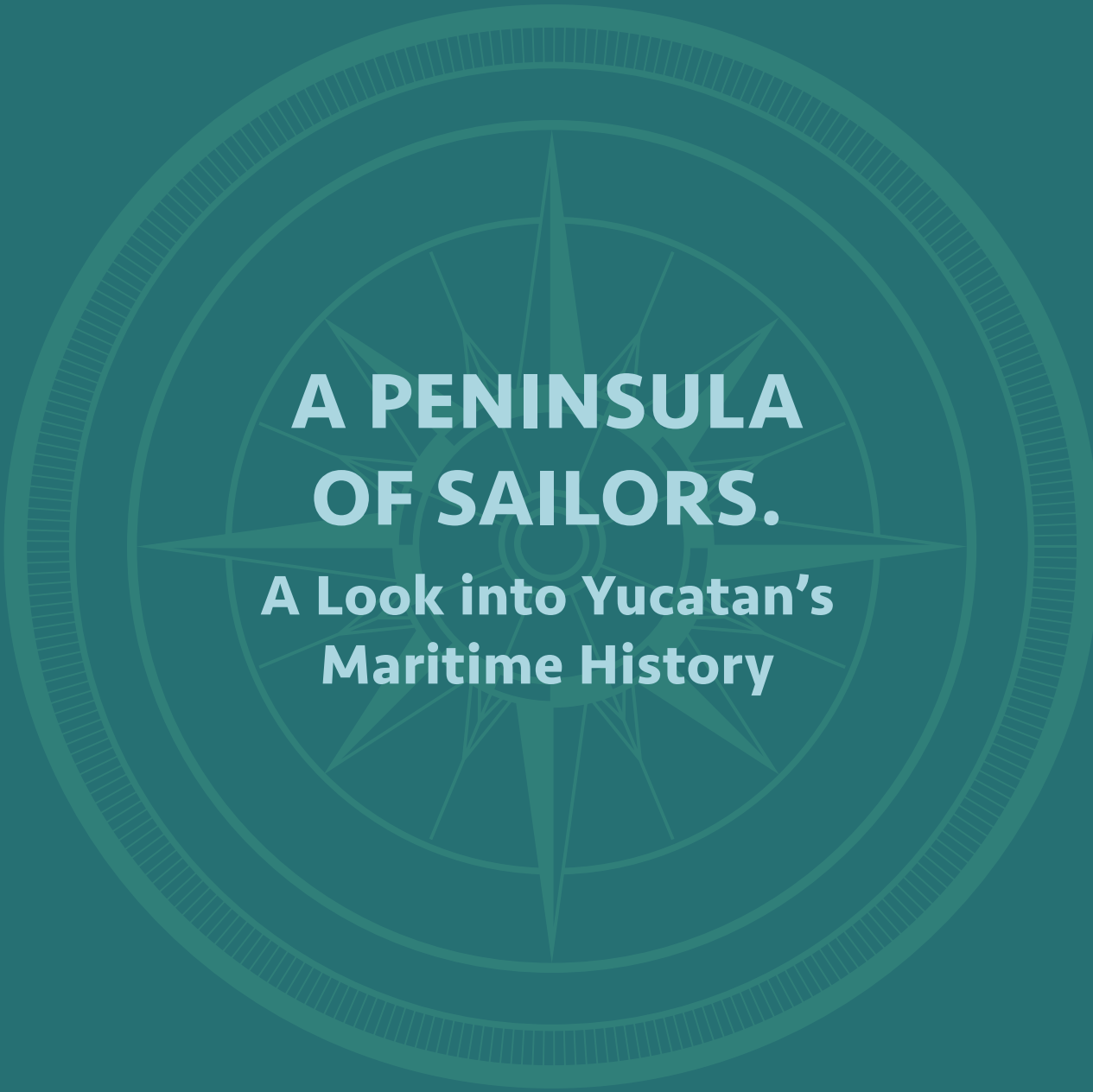


Juntos transformemos
Yucatán
GOBIERNO DEL ESTADO

SEDECULTA
SECRETARÍA DE LA CULTURA
Y LOS RITOS



EL GRAN MUSEO DEL
MUNDO MAYA
DE MÉRIDA



A PENINSULA OF SAILORS.

A Look into Yucatan's Maritime History

When Spanish sailors first heard about Yucatan, they believed it to be an island, an exotic land full of riches. After several expeditions, they came to realize that the new territories were part of a peninsula and that the gold and silver they so badly yearned to find was nothing but a dream. However, they found other unexpected riches; the remains of great cities that the Maya, former rulers of this land, had built in the middle of the jungle, sculpted from the stones that shape the land.

The people from Yucatan have been natural sailors due to the fact that three out of the four cardinal points are surrounded by sea. The Maya people developed important maritime routes. The coasts of Yucatan were the door through which the Spaniards entered what is now known as Mexico and, during the colonial period, aboard galleons, bergantines and schooners, people, artifacts and new ideologies arrived, flourishing into a new culture and a new way of living for the residents of the peninsula. The 19th century brought political and geographical division and with it the decline of seaports and the development of new ones.

The exhibition ***A Peninsula of Sailors, A Look into Yucatan's Maritime History***, is an invitation to navigate through the history and memory of Yucatan, and to discover some aspects of the relationship between the local people and the sea.

The Ministry of Culture and Arts of the Government of the State of Yucatan, through the Great Museum of the Mayan World of Merida, appreciate the support from the AIEC programme for its contribution to carry out this exhibition.





The background is a detailed line-art illustration in a light orange-brown color, depicting various aspects of Peninsular Maya life. It includes scenes of people carrying loads on their backs, cooking over open fires, a person using a net to catch fish, a large crocodile, people in canoes on the water, and various agricultural and domestic activities. The style is reminiscent of ancient Mesoamerican art.

Navigation among the Peninsular Maya

The Maya performed outstanding maritime activities during the different periods of their cultural development, mainly with the purpose of trade and warfare. Mayan boats were of different size, ranging from small canoes suitable only for one person, to bigger ones carved out of mahogany or zapote trees with capacity for 50 people. Alongside the coastline many ports were established in places such as Tzikul, Xcambó, Cerritos Island, Xelhá and Cozumel, mainly used for salt mines and trading purposes, they had close connection with the nearby cities and even the big metropolis of Mexico and Central America.



Disco con representación de una batalla naval
Alvar Carrillo Gil, *La verdad sobre el Cenote Sagrado de Chichén Itzá*. Ediciones Asociación Cívica de Yucatán, México, 1959



Plato trípode con ave

Xcambó, Yucatán

Cerámica policromada

Clásico tardío (600-900 d.C.)

INAH, Gran Museo del Mundo Maya de Mérida



Collar

Chichén Itzá, Yucatán

Jade y concha tallada

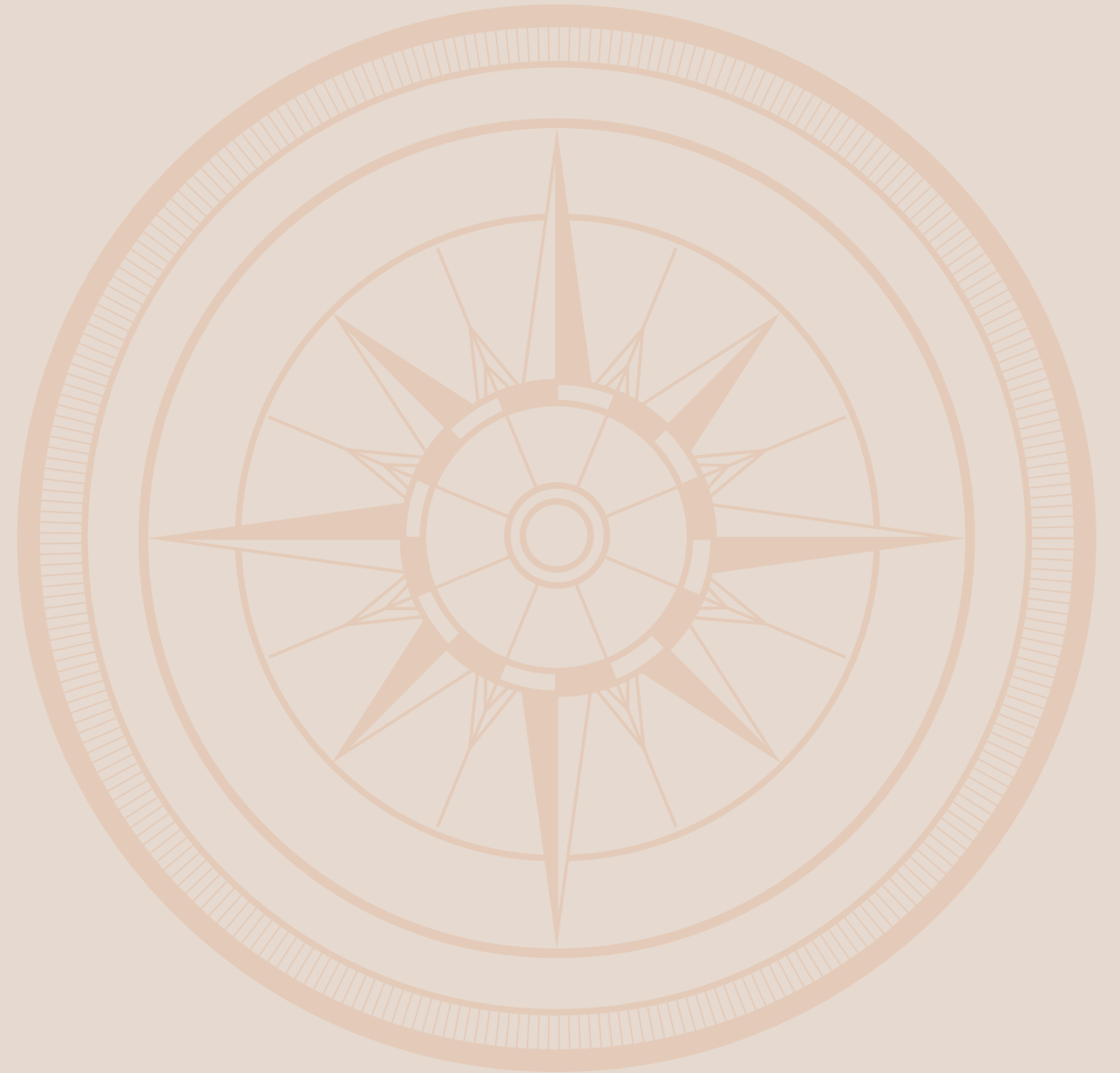
Posclásico temprano (1000-1250 d.C.)

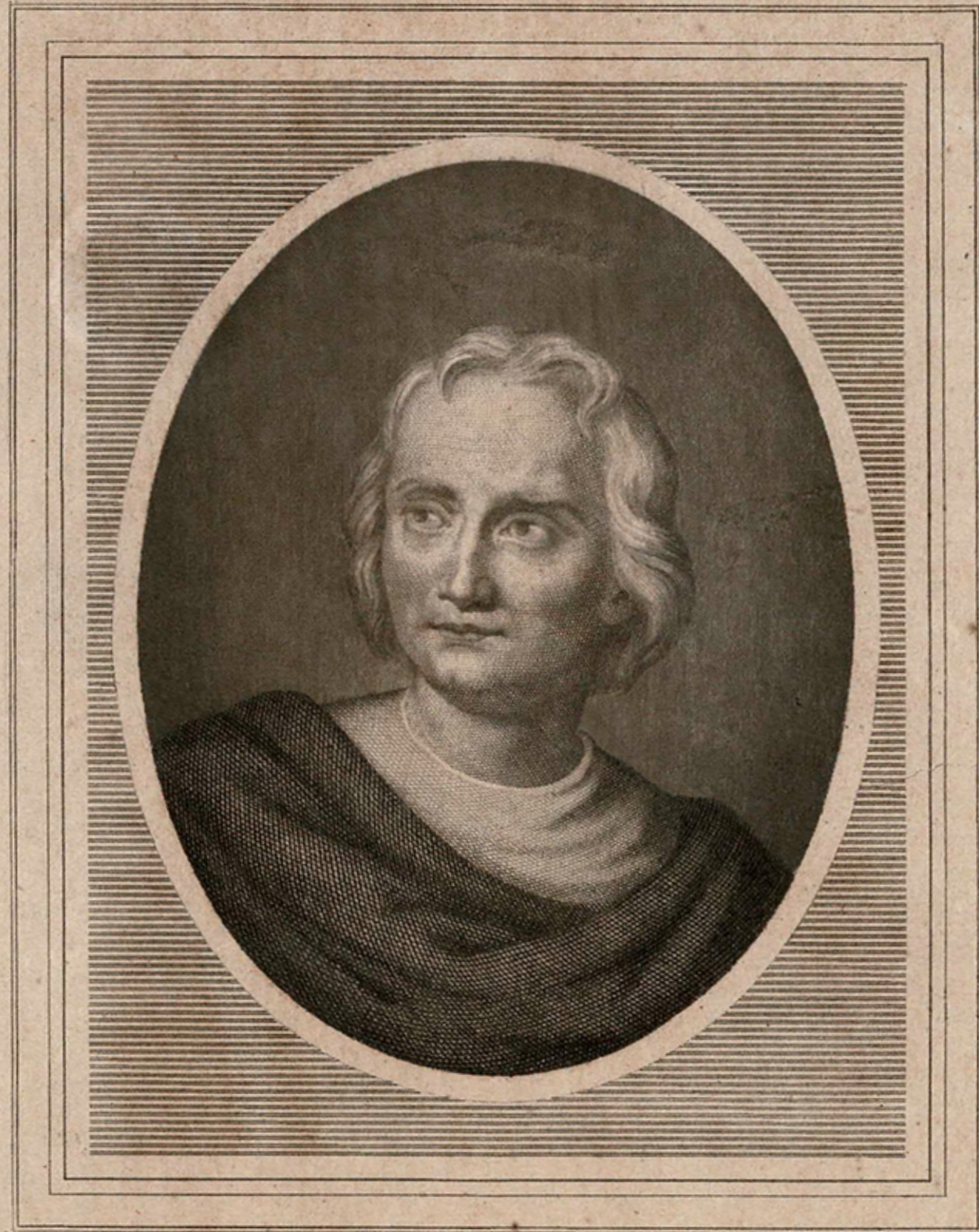
INAH, Gran Museo del Mundo Maya de Mérida

Navigation and Trade During the Colonial Period

The first encounter between the Maya people and the Europeans took place in 1502, during Christopher Columbus' fourth voyage. It was the first contact between two different civilizations: the western and the Peninsular Maya. After two failed attempts to dominate the territory, the conquerors, led by the Montejo's, founded the main cities, towns and ports of the province: Merida, San Francisco de Campeche, Valladolid and Bacalar, this establishing the Spanish presence in the region.

The absence of precious metals and the harsh environmental conditions paved the way for trade to become one of the fundamental activities for the economy. Trade flourished from Campeche to Spain, The Antilles and the Canary Islands. Products such as wine, oil, beautiful fabrics and books were imported. On the other hand, raw materials such as natural dyes, salt, honey, cacao and cotton products were exported.





I Fratelli Campo Antico incisero per commissione del Signor Giuseppe di G. Baldi Genova l'Anno 1879



Cristóbal Colón

Hermanos Campo Antico

1879

Grabado

Génova, Italia

Colección particular



Telescopio

1680

Grabado

Gran Museo del Mundo Maya de Mérida





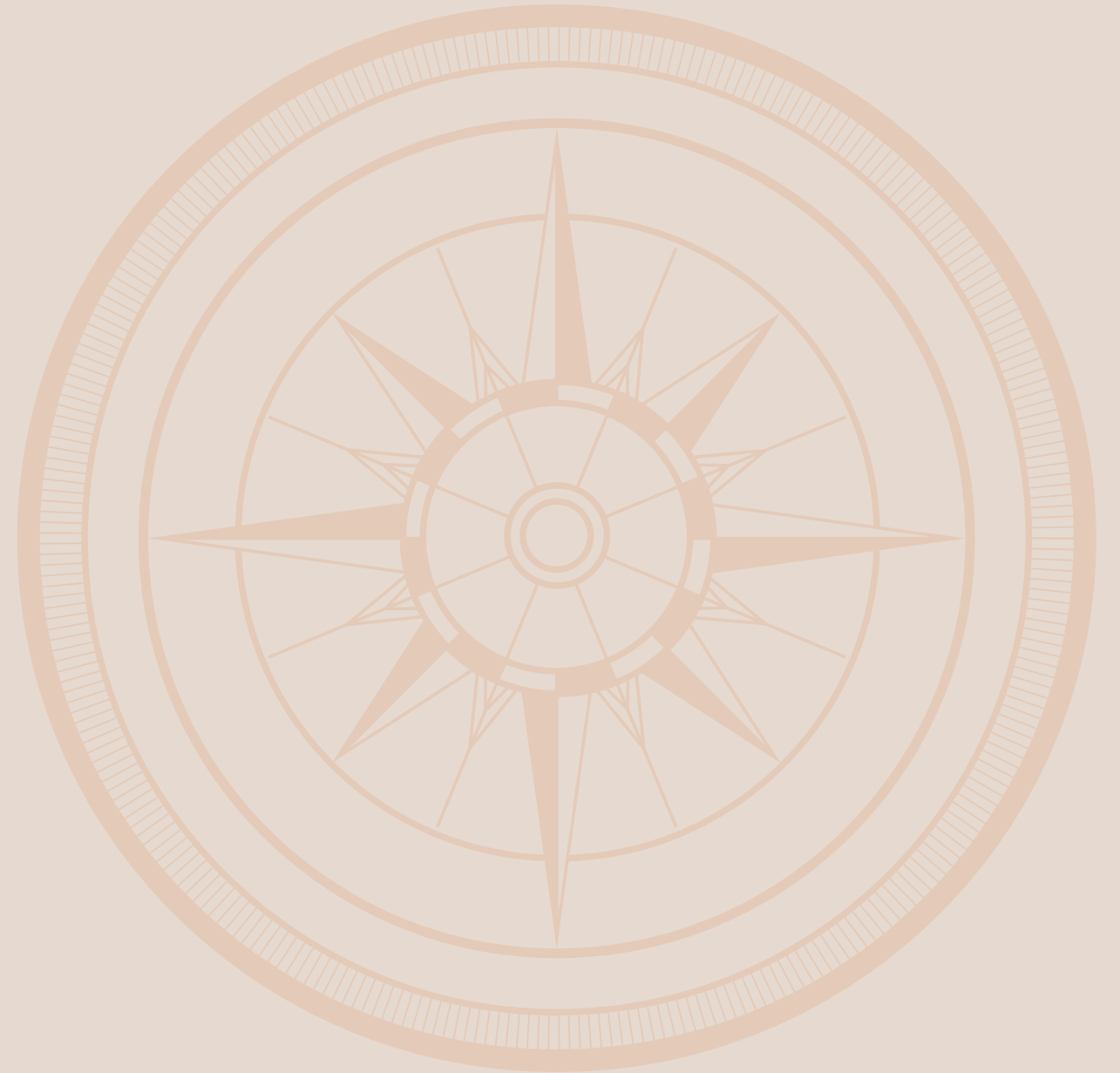
San Francisco de Campeche
O. Dapper
1673
Grabado
Patronato Pro-Historia Peninsular A.C.

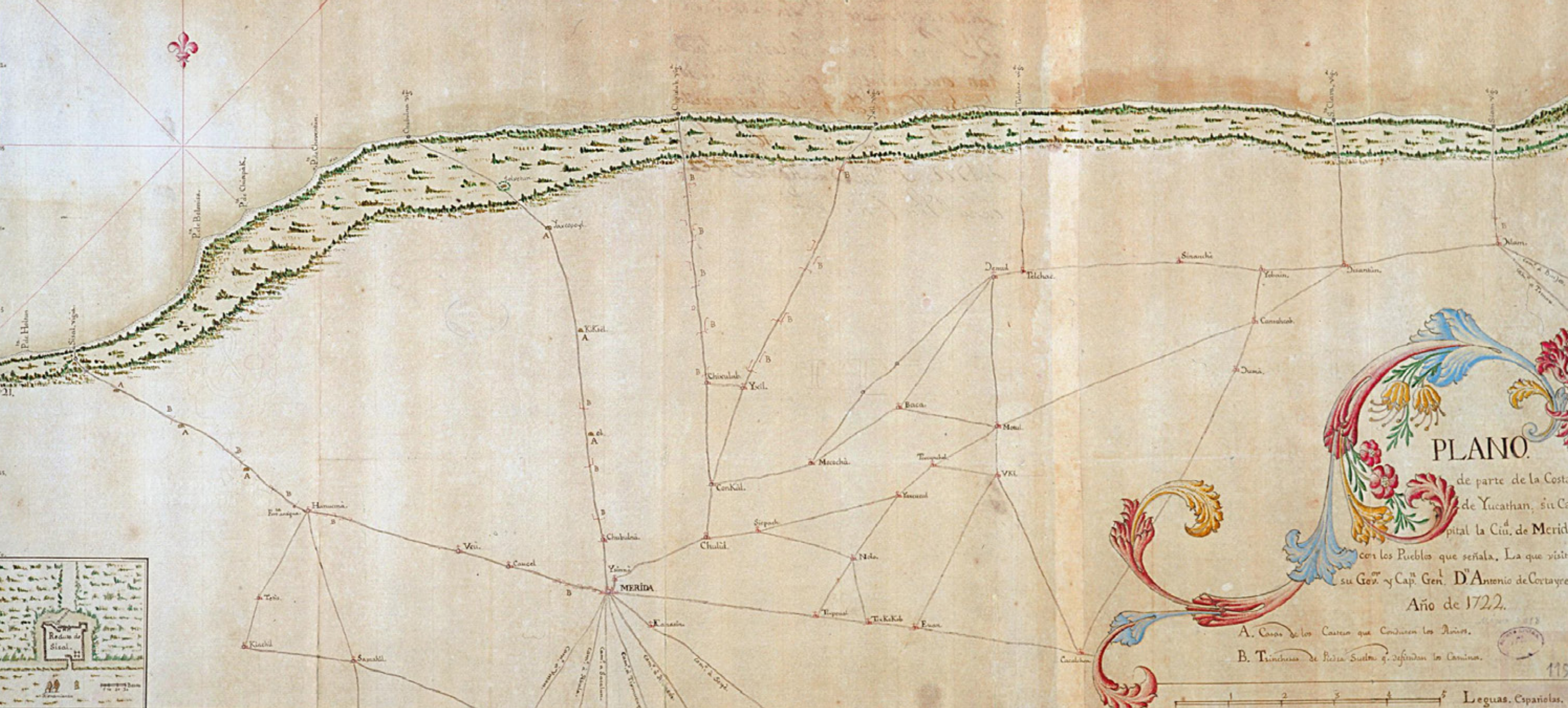


Defending the Coasts: Piracy and Ramparts

The constant pirate siege on the coasts of the Yucatan Peninsula was one of the biggest concerns of the Colonial government. On several occasions, drawn by the abundance in the harbours, Dutch, French and English pirates invaded Campeche. The attacks were not limited to the shores, they also raided ships on the high seas and even went inland to destroy the towns and capture its inhabitants.

This situation encouraged the construction of defensive systems on the main towns of the area. Campeche was completely surrounded by a fortress, the bastions of Sisal, Bacalar and the Castle of San Benito were built, and a surveillance system was implemented as well as trenches assembled to protect Merida from a possible invasion.





Plano de la parte de la costa de Yucatán
Alejandro José de Güelle (atribuido)
1722
Plano manuscrito e iluminado sobre papel
Sevilla, España
Archivo General de Indias



El Monifato de Sisal

Emilio Gaspar Segura López

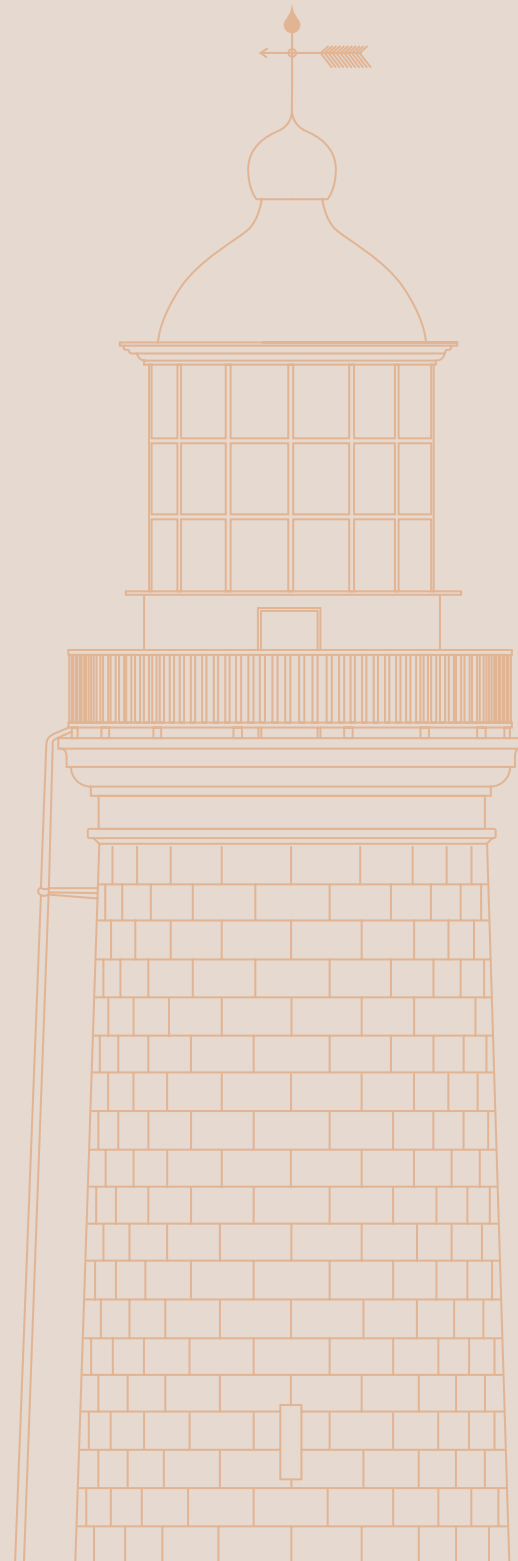
2016

Fotografía digital

The Port of Progreso: A New Route for Navigation in Yucatan

During the first decades of the 19th century, henequen harvest was starting to be regarded as a promising industry for the Yucatan economy. At the beginning, Sisal was the main centre/port for shipping and exporting the fibre. However, the characteristics of the town and its difficult communication with Merida, determined that some businessmen began to plan the creation of a more accessible port, one with the right capacity for trade and international navigation.

In 1846 Juan Miguel Castro began the negotiations to move the commercial Customs office from Sisal to a new location on the coast, closer to the capital. Ten years later, on May 28, 1856, the Federal Government authorized the creation of Progreso. Nowadays, this port is one of the most important in the Peninsula, with a predominant fishing and commercial activity; It is considered the gateway to the Mayan World and a very popular holiday destination among the local families.





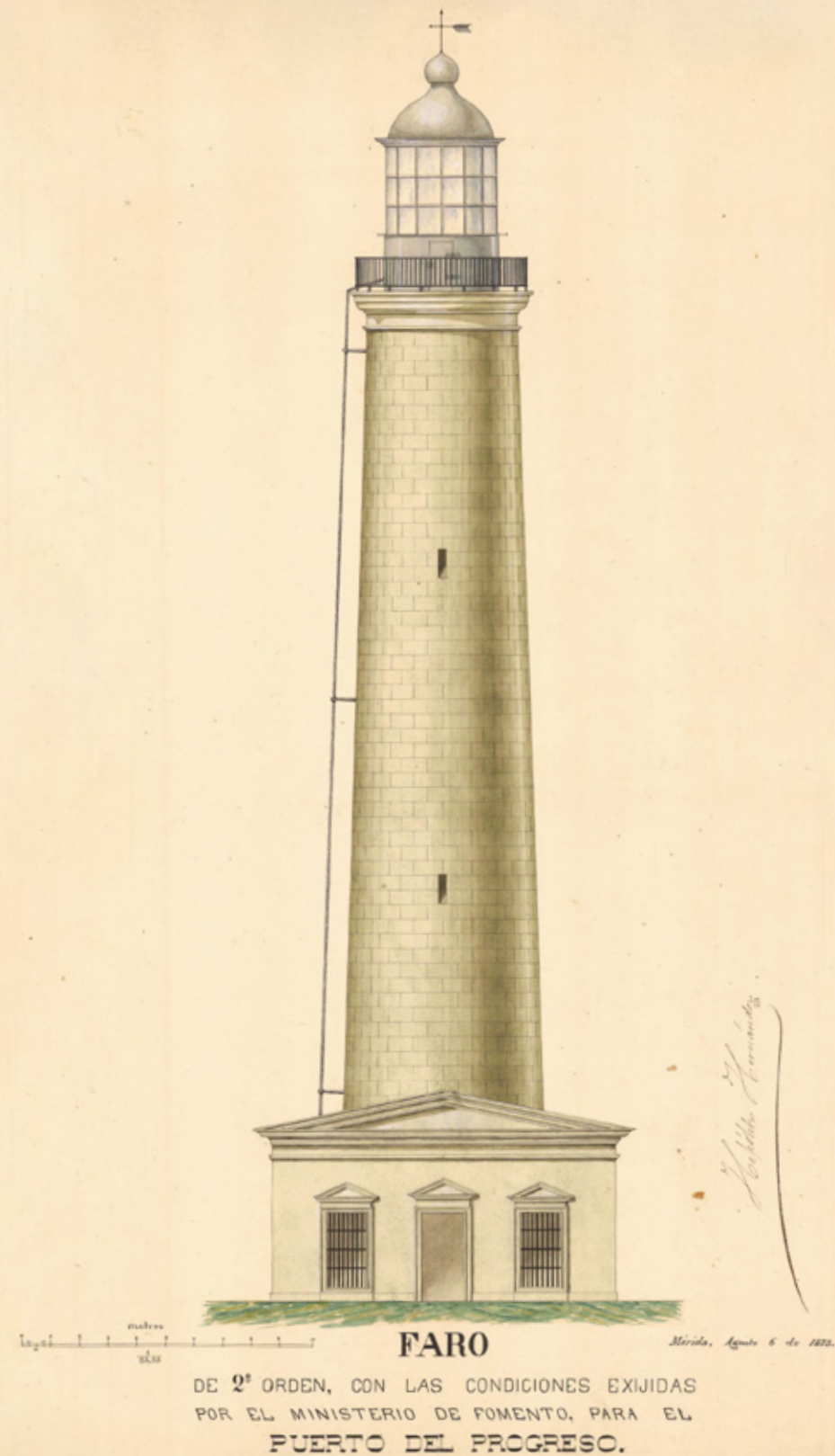
**Faro de 2º orden con las condiciones exigidas por el
Ministerio de Fomento para el Puerto de Progreso**

Hipólito Hernández

1873

Papel manuscrito acquarelado

Mapoteca "Manuel Orozco y Berra", SAGARPA



Pescadores de Chelem

Emilio Gaspar Segura López

2018

Fotografía digital



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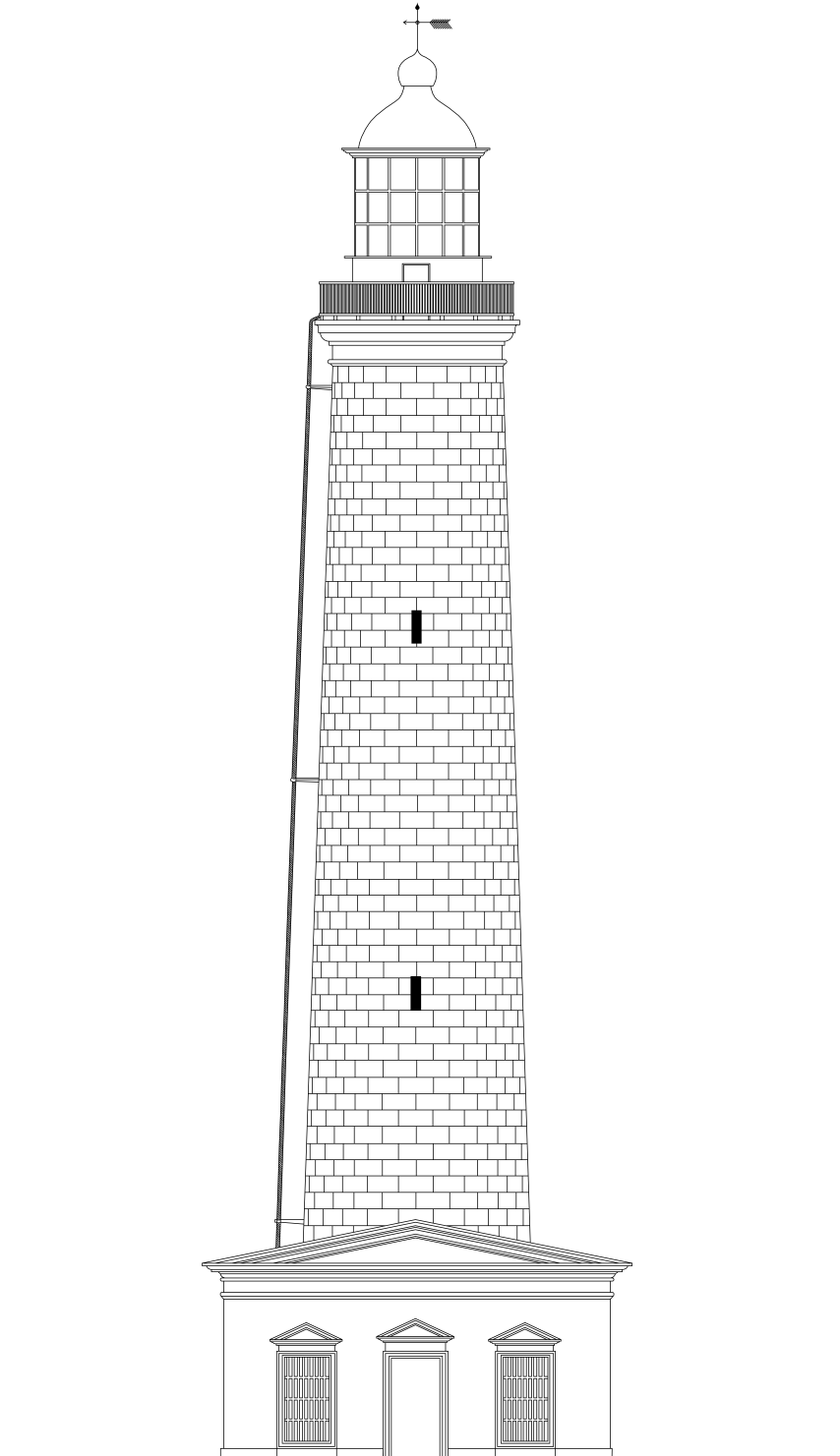
AGRADECIMIENTOS

Patronato Pro-Historia Peninsular A.C.
Mapoteca “Manuel Orozco y Berra”, SAGARPA
Archivo General de Indias
Emilio Gaspar Segura López

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El Gobierno del Estado de Yucatán, a través de la Secretaría de la Cultura y las Artes, extiende su agradecimiento por ser beneficiario del Programa de Apoyos a Instituciones Estatales de Cultura AIEC 2022 del Gobierno Federal, reiterando así su compromiso de ampliar y enriquecer la cobertura de su oferta cultural dentro del territorio del estado y hacia las demás entidades de la República.





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