

Actuncan

Early Classic Maya Project



Report of the first season
2001

L.J. LeCount & J.H. Blitz

Actuncan Early Classic Project: Report of the First Season

**Lisa J. LeCount
University of Alabama**

and

**John H. Blitz
University of Oklahoma**

Report submitted to the Belize Department of Archaeology

December 2001

Table of Contents

Lists of Figures and Tables	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Introduction	01
Research Background and Questions	02
Field Methodology and Excavations	13
Results and Discussion	20
References	23
Figures	29
Tables	44

List of Figures

Figure 01: Actuncan Site Map. Drafted by James McGovern and modified by authors.	29
Figure 02: Actuncan <i>Plazuela</i> 1 (AP-1).	30
Figure 03: AP-1 Operation 1/Suboperation A -- West Profile.	31
Figure 04: AP-1 Operation 1/Suboperation B -- South Profile.	33
Figure 05: AP-1 Operation 1/Suboperation B -- East Profile.	35
Figure 06: Limestone Capstones on top of Burial 1 Crypt (a); Burial 1 (b).	37
Figure 07: Brown ware bird effigy lid: top and bottom views.	38
Figure 08: Actuncan <i>Plazuela</i> 2 (AP-2).	39
Figure 09: AP-2 Operation 2/Suboperation A -- West Profile.	40
Figure 10: Actuncan <i>Plauzela</i> 3 (AP-3).	42
Figure 11: AP-3 Operation 3/Suboperation A -- North Profile.	43

List of Tables

Table 01: Uaxactun Early Classic Pottery Attributes.	44
Table 02: Barton Ramie Early Classic Pottery Types, Attributes, and Relative Frequencies.	45
Table 03: Summary of Research Activity on Actuncan Civic Architecture.	47
Table 04: Summary of Excavation Lots and Ceramic Period Designations.	48
Table 05: Summary of Non-ceramic Artifacts by Excavation Lot.	51
Table 06: Summary of Non-ceramic Artifacts by Period and Excavation Volume.	53

Acknowledgements

Funding for this project was provided by a H. John Heinz III Fund Grant Program for Latin American Archaeology (H1523) and a University of Alabama Research Advisory Committee Grant (2-67989). We gratefully acknowledge this financial aid.

Investigations at Actuncan took place through the generous permission and support of the Belize Department of Archaeology, especially Commissioners George Thompson, Jaime Awe, Allan Moore, John Morris, and Brian Woodeye. We particularly want to thank Jaime Awe for his diplomacy in negotiating permission to dig at Actuncan. Our thanks go to Richard Leventhal and Wendy Ashmore for their help with the excavation permit, and to Jason Yaeger, who offered good advice on excavation strategy. James McGovern graciously provided field notes, maps, and illustrations from his research at Actuncan. It was Jim's work that initially peaked LeCount's interest in the Early Classic period.

The Galvez family at Clarissa Falls gave permission to excavate on their land, and we appreciate Mr. Ramon Galvez's patience for any inconveniences that our work might have caused him. We were especially grateful for the use of their canoe to cross the Mopan River. Chena Galvez's hospitality and excellent food sustained us through the summer, and we give her special thanks. As always, Mr. Rudy Juan was a source of valuable information, and we want to thank him for giving us permission to cross his land.

We were assisted in our research by many dedicated individuals from San José de Succotz. The information in this report was the result of skilled excavations by Luis (Johnny) and Edwin Camal, whose hardwork and enthusiasm made this field season both successful and enjoyable. We're not sure how we would have safely crossed the Mopan River without them. We were assisted in the field and laboratory by Habimael Chan, Yolanda Chi Camal, Luby Morales, Sellena Camal, Mirla Chan, Alma Coc, and Norma Camal.

Last, but not least, many thanks are due to John Yaeger, Judy Yaeger and Florentino Peñados, the gracious hosts at the Trek Stop, for providing us with more than just food and shelter, but truly a home away from home.

Introduction

This report describes the research goals of the Actuncan Early Classic Maya Project and the results of the initial field season. The Actuncan Early Classic Maya Project is designed as a two-stage archaeological research investigation that explores the Early Classic (A.D. 250 to 500), a time period when many lowland Maya polities were sufficiently large and complex to qualify as archaic states. The project will provide critical data for creating a model for the institutionalization of Maya kingship during the Early Classic period.

The first phase of the project focuses on placing the Early Classic period into a more secure temporal framework. Despite its anthropological significance, the Early Classic is one of the least understood archaeological time periods in the Maya lowlands. So few sites exhibit civic architecture dated to this period that researchers suggest a severe depopulation of the area and aggregation of the remaining populace into a few large sites, like Actuncan. It is equally plausible, however, that the Early Classic "hiatus" is a product of our own making.

Archaeologists have relied predominately on elite pottery styles, many of which were first identified at Uaxactun (R. E. Smith 1955) and Holmul (Merwin and Vaillant 1932) to recognize Early Classic material remains (Lincoln 1985). These elite types, however, are found in very small frequencies in hinterland sites (see Adams 1971; Ball 1977; Gifford 1976; Sabloff 1975). This pattern has led some researchers (Awe 1992; Demarest 1992; Ford 1991; Lincoln 1985) to suggest that Early Classic assemblages contain mostly long-lived Preclassic pottery types and regional styles not identified in seminal ceramic reports. Our current typological scheme is problematic since the persistence of earlier pottery styles into the Classic period could artificially inflate the number of Late Preclassic (A.D. 100-250) sites and falsely exaggerate the decline in Early Classic sites. Basic chronology building is required before detailed models for the rise of Maya states can be tested.

The second phase of the research project will be oriented toward large-scale excavations in domestic residences and civic buildings. Early Classic occupation floors and refuse areas will be targeted to recover a wide range of artifact classes including botanical, ceramic, lithic, and wealth goods. Comparison of material assemblages across royal, elite, and commoner households should help explain how Maya rulers institutionalized power in the Early Classic. This phase of the project will begin after the materials from the test excavations have yielded a clearer idea of what we are looking for, especially in terms of a recognizable ceramic assemblage, and where to look for Early Classic deposits within the site of Actuncan. It may begin as early as 2003.

This report is organized into three main sections: the first section is a detailed discussion of the research question and methodology, the second section describes the excavation operations in detail, and the third section presents preliminary findings. The report is short since the first field season was exploratory. Excavations were conducted for three weeks from June to July 2001, and they were devoted to recovering chronological data. More or less we found what we were looking for -- abundant ceramics, some carbon samples, and stratified deposits -- for absolute and relative dating. But these test excavations also provided a very good sense of how difficult this research project will be. Because of the limited scope of this season's work, a second field

season has been proposed to continue the testing of house mounds. It has become apparent that the initial phase of this project might extend into multiple seasons.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND QUESTIONS

Archaeologists agree that ancient Maya leaders initially established political authority in the form of aristocracies during the Late Preclassic period (350 B.C to A.D. 250). As divine rulers they reigned over autonomous kingdoms where innovations in monumental architecture, hieroglyphic writing, and decorative arts flourished. How these leaders formalized their kingly positions is debatable. The Actuncan Early Classic Project is designed to provide critical data for testing current models for the institutionalization of kingship during the Early Classic.

Archaeologists recognize three basic strategies that create centralized, regional authority: 1) control over the means of production and/or distribution that monopolizes economic resources, 2) domination of ideological constructs that validate the position of leaders, or 3) warfare and militarism that extends local rule over subservient provincial populations (see Earle 1991). Although these strategies may not have been employed exclusively, Maya scholars currently favor a model that emphasizes the role of ritual and public display as the initial source of kingly power (Demarest 1992; Freidel 1992; Freidel and Schele 1988).

Current models reconstruct early kingship as a charismatic position that revolved around dramatic rituals. Performance of these rituals created the ruler's position as *ahaw*, a sacred ruler endowed with supernatural powers and the ability to communicate with divine ancestors. Awe-inspiring rituals and displays of wealth convinced less privileged households and small communities to pledge loyalty and labor to the polity. As a consequence, centers experienced a boom in the construction of pyramids, palaces, and carved monuments that functioned as stages and backdrops for rituals glorifying rulers and their ancestors. Rapid innovation and elaboration of status symbols, such as royal trappings and ritual paraphernalia, in addition to more common luxury items such as polychrome pottery, served to reify and legitimize differences in social standing.

According to Freidel and Schele (1988), the position of *ahaw* was invented to accommodate the growing disparity in wealth and prestige brought upon by successful trade and interaction between Maya community leaders, their allies, and non-Maya neighbors over the course of the Preclassic era. Freidel (1981:226) suggests that social stratification already was established by Late Preclassic times in the Maya lowlands. Religious symbols of the cosmic and world order materialized the inequality extant in relationships of power and laid the foundation for civilization as a state of mind. The idea that social rights justified political authority in early state societies still lies at the heart of models that attempt to explain the rise of the state. Fried (1967:185) suggests that differential rights to basic resources (social stratification) is at the core of state level societies and precedes the crystallization of bureaucratic political institutions. In part, sophisticated political power was implemented to maintain privileges that were already in

place and structuring the framework of authority. According to Fried (1967:232), the socially privileged group developed political power by exploiting nonkin labor and receiving favors from relatives and clients. Their social status afforded them the right to make all effective community decisions concerning corporate resources, formation of alliances, and regional conflict. As social relations became more complex, rivalry, trade, and warfare promoted greater political specialization, increased professional organization, and tighter internal control within a developing political order.

Preclassic Maya leaders may have first established rulership by performing rituals that placated gods, but during the Classic they formalized their claims to kingship by demonstrating their ancestry to those gods. Freidel and Schele (Freidel and Schele 1988, 1989; Schele 1985) provide architectural, monumental, and sculptural evidence to construct this interpretation. At Cerros, leaders performed community-based rites on Structure 5C, a pyramid decorated with stucco panels depicting celestial agents along the terrace façade. This structure acted as a stage where the ruler placed himself in a mediating position between the community and the four cycling cosmological powers which ensured agricultural fertility and the continuation of the cosmos. Early monuments depicted rulers as manipulators of the supernatural domain (Schele and Freidel 1990:87). For instance the Hauberg stela dated to A.D. 199 depicts a king with the supernaturals he has materialized by shedding his blood. This ritual was most likely a public affirmation of his ability to open a portal to the supernatural realm.

During the Early Classic period, Maya kingship was transformed into a stable political institution by the adoption of genealogical principles of succession and the standardization of ritual (Freidel and Schele 1988:549). Late Classic period pyramidal structures lack stucco masks portraying supernaturals, and functioned predominately as *witz*, the sacred home of lineage ancestors and the funerary shrines for rulers. This marks a fundamental change in the ideological underpinning of the meaning of temples by supporting the institution of kingship as a personal tomb. Late Classic stelae focus on the deeds of kings and queens, their royal parentage, and calendrical events (Marcus 1992). Classic period religious and political power was fused together shifting the focus from community to the elite individual.

Advocates of this model propose that Classic Maya polities were unstable precisely because political authority was based fundamentally on social and religious constructs rather than economic control over agricultural surplus and craft goods. Classic Maya political integration is portrayed as relatively weak both horizontally, between individuals of the same political rank and social standing, and vertically, between ruling nobility, subordinate elite, and their supporting populace (Hendon 1991; Sanders 1989). Similarly, economic organization is considered to have been unspecialized and redundant, with the production of food and crafts taking place in dispersed households, seldom under centralized control (Demarest 1992).

This reconstruction has testable implications. If rulers institutionalized their positions based on religious duties and sanctions, then elites should have controlled ritual knowledge and exotic wealth items necessary for performing ceremonies. Production and exchange of utilitarian objects or the storage and management of staple goods would have been regulated by local communities rather than by centralized state bureaucracies. Craft items, as well as agricultural goods, therefore, would have been widely circulated throughout Early Classic society. These

strategies should be visible at the site of Actuncan by comparing the distribution of utilitarian versus wealth goods across elite and commoner households.

What is lacking in this model, however, is a more detailed description of the nature of the early Maya state and how it would have been organized as a regional system. There has been little archaeological research conducted on understanding the early Maya political economy, the size of the political territory, the extent and degree of articulation between groups and institutions, and the nature of the integration of autonomous polities into the state. As stated by Marcus and Feinman (1998) these more complex research questions can only be understood if we study political systems at a number of different scales: the household, the site, the region, and the larger cultural sphere of influence. Obviously, this research cannot address all of these important questions, but a clearer understanding of the concepts associated with state-level institutions will clarify those questions the Actuncan Early Classic Maya Project will be able to address.

The Concept of the State

In a recent book, Feinman (1998:96) defined archaic states to be composed of rather small, modular components that form multipolity networks. These polities exhibit marked structures of inequality, the stratification of wealth and power, and integrative mechanisms above those associated with kinship and descent. According to Marcus and Feinman (1998:6) those characteristics most often associated with archaic states included:

- 1) Four-tiered regional settlement hierarchy
- 2) Three levels of decision-making
- 3) Ideology of stratification that established a king's divine right to rule
- 4) Social stratification into two endogamous strata
- 5) Palace as the ruler's official residence
- 6) Government that employed legal force while denying individual force
- 7) Establishment of codified governmental laws and the ability to enforce them

These characteristics exemplify what Marcus (1993:116) has concluded is key concept of archaic states: hierarchy. This organizational mode is lacking in middle range societies such as chiefdoms where power is concentrated in the hands of an elite lineage whose paramount leader is at the head of the political, social and religious orders. These individuals wield great personal power, very similar to kings in state-level societies, but in state level societies the sources of power increasingly are centralized and segmented. This process results in the promotion and linearization of political positions into a hierarchical arrangement of relationships and institutions (Flannery 1972). As Baines and Yoffee (1998) suggest, hierarchy orders, legitimizes, and funds state structures.

Some characteristics found on this list, however, are not universally accepted as characteristics of state level organizations. The Mature Harappan state had no temples or palaces (Possehl 1998). A corporate political strategy, one based on collective leadership and an egalitarian ethos, was the founding principle in the socio-cultural evolution of archaic states such as Teotihuacán and Early Mesopotamia (Blanton 1998). Features of many mature states, including large population size, multi-ethnic populations, urbanization, full-time craft specialists, and standing

armies, must also be explained as arising from particular conditions rather than as inevitable outcomes of the evolution of a regional, governing institution. Variation in economic, social, and political features of archaic states (Feinman and Marcus 1998) should be studied in terms of constituent elements or bundled continua of variation (de Montmollin 1989), and not assumed to be part and parcel of a monolithic state organization. Investigations that focus on inventorying these characteristics overlook the extensive amount of variability evident in early states and diminish our understanding of the processes by which the archaic state developed. More work needs to focus on investigating centralization (the degree of linkage between the various groups and institutions), segregation (the amount of internal differentiation and specialization of groups and institutions), and political economy (the nature of political finance and its articulation with domestic production, consumption, and distribution) in order to understand the varied conditions that lead to the development of multiplicity, regional power.

How rulers organized and integrated their constituents is a basic question since there are many organizational strategies (Blanton 1998, Blanton et al. 1996; Baines and Yoffee 1998). The early state was most likely not a highly integrated institution with its various divisions performing a set of well-defined and routinized tasks like those of post-modern western bureaucracies. Rather, the organizational and structural properties of early states were the outcomes of the conflictive interaction of social actors, collective groups, and disparate institutions with separate agendas, both within and outside the official decision-making body (Blanton 1998:140). According to Blanton (1998), power can be either intermember (individual centered social networks) or systemic (collectively centered social networks), both of which can further be subdivided into exclusionary and corporate categories. Exclusionary power is essentially associated with domination of subordinates, and implies that leaders have few or no restrictions on their exercise of power. Systematic exclusionary power, therefore, can be instituted by bureaucratic measures, control of access to the supernatural, or the promulgation of an ideological code of conduct. On the other hand, corporate power is characterized as having less potential to exercise and monopolize authority with heightened autonomy and communication between groups or institutions. Systematic corporate government features a bureaucracy that is not entirely subordinated by the ruler but is established to ensure that leaders conform to established political practices, some of which may have been designed to level social differences in society. Within these power structures, political actors compete for authority and resources using a set of political, social, and economic strategies that are to some extent limited by the kinds of relationships and political ideologies existent in that society.

Power wielded by Classic Maya leaders was most likely systematic and exclusionary. According to Blanton (1998:144) strategies for maintaining this power involved objective measures such as 1) state control of distribution of prestige goods, 2) state monopoly of the production of goods symbolizing official offices, 3) elite subordination of attached craft specialists, and 4) state control of exotic instruments of war. Cognitive symbolic measures may include 1) the ritual sanctification of authority, 2) the subordination of the bureaucracy by the ruler, 3) the monopoly of religious benefits, and 4) the declaration of ideological concepts such as society as the patrimony of the ruler. These types of exclusionary power strategies resulted in comparatively small, autonomous polities linked by trade, warfare, and the marriages of rulers into a large interactive network (Blanton et al. 1996:3), rather than large-scale, relative stable polities based on some kind of corporate strategy. Although most Mayanists would agree that this

characterization broadly exemplifies the Classic Maya state, they argue about scale and scope of centralization and segmentation, and primacy of these strategies. Chase and Chase (1996) state that scholars have consistently underestimated the degree of centralization of Classic Maya political and economic organization and the size and territorial extent of a Maya state.

Unlike the exclusionary political economies of the Classic lowland Maya kingdoms, Late Formative polities have been described as strongly corporate (Blanton et al 1996:9). Corporate political economies may have been ideologically organized around a transcendent sacred authority and a set of cognitive codes that emphasize shared morals similar to Durkheim's concept of mechanical integration. These governments may lack the kind of centralized political structures associated with ruler-centered political hierarchies and bureaucracies found in archaic states. Political decision making involves an assembly or council in which the people have a voice or have representatives who make decisions regarding the group as a whole. Cultural practices emphasize an egalitarian ethos that restricted the accumulation of power or wealth in the hands of specific persons and prevent the exercise of exclusionary power strategies. Communal rituals serve to sanctify and culturally reinforce the egalitarian order and act as a mechanism of social integration. Large architectural spaces are constructed for group rituals rather than the glorification of ruling lineages. Lower-order groups and institutions are semiautonomous and function with a great deal of control at the local level. Corporate regulations inhibit the exclusionary control of the production and distribution of politically charged goods, symbols of office, and military insignia, but may be involved in the redistribution of particular goods including some which are commonly thought of as prestige goods. Wealthy patrons may be involved in gifting networks but these transactions benefit the collectivity and transcend individuals. The corporate political economy is based, therefore, on decentralized prestige-good systems, redistributive integration, and civic gifting. Although the Late Formative Maya polities are not expected to conform to all of these characteristics, architectural aspects at Cerros and Uaxactun have already been shown to comply with this model (Blanton et al 1996). However, no archaeological studies have specifically tested Blanton's interpretation.

What happened during the Early Classic period that caused the shift from a corporate to an exclusionary political economy? Did a highly centralized political hierarchy emerge? If so, then rulers' palaces should be clearly present, and standardized in form, at Early Classic sites such as Actuncan. According to Flannery (1998:40) temples preceded both the rise of the state and the first clear palaces among the Maya. But the historical progression of Maya palaces is not well documented because of overburden of Late Classic civic construction. Did they arise from "whole cloth" or did they develop from a temple complex? A second line of questioning surrounds the political economy of the Early Classic. Did a few elite lineages monopolize the production and/or distribution of staple or prestige goods? Staple finance generally involves obligatory payments in kind to the state of subsistence goods such as grains, livestock, and clothing (D'Altroy and Earle 1985). Staples are collected by the state from individual's larders as a levy or tax. In turn, the state uses these goods to support personnel attached to the state or as wages for those who work for the state part-time. Because they are typically heavy in relation to their value, staple finance is appropriate for relatively small agrarian states or those large empires that can facilitate their movement within a dispersed regional system. These bulky items must be stored until they are distributed; therefore, this strategy has very obvious archaeological signatures. Among the ancient Maya, state regulated storage facilities have never been formally

recognized, but according to Hendon (2000), elites may have stored goods in single entrance rooms in palace structures. The problem with recognizing storage is that this activity leaves so few archaeological traces that we may have overlooked this function in favor of interpreting these rooms as having an administrative purpose. For instance, the agglutinated "palace" at Nakum, a long narrow structure consisting of modular units arranged in two rows, may have been used for storage much like the Inka *collqas*. Of course, this hypothesis requires testing. Wealth finance involves the manufacture and procurement of special products that are used as a means of payment. They are amassed as direct payment from subservient groups, or produced by craft specialists attached to the central authority. Because wealth held by the state is used to pay state personnel, these goods often have established values so as to facilitate the exchange of a consumable product into staples. According to D'Altroy and Earle (1985:188) the main advantage of wealth finance is the storability and transportability of these goods, however, they have limited use value. Wealth finance depends on a market system so that luxury goods can be converted into staples by state personnel that have no other access to agrarian products. The archaeological evidence for Postclassic markets and political currency is particularly strong for the Aztec (Brumfiel 1976, 1980), but the evidence has been elusive for their presence in Classic Maya sites. Clearly, more research must be conducted to recognize these salient features and understand the processes that transform a relatively corporate political organization into the exclusive systemic Classic period states so well recognized in the archaeological record.

Early Classic Research

Our understanding of the Early Classic period is based predominately on excavations at central Petén sites such as Tikal (Jones 1991; Jones and Satterthwaite 1982), Uaxactun (Ricketson and Ricketson 1937; A.L. Smith 1950), and Holmul (Merwin and Vaillant 1932). The advent of the Early Classic in the lowlands is marked by dynastic inscriptions carved in stone monuments and the innovation of polychrome pottery. From stelae inscriptions and royal tomb contents, researchers have reconstructed a detailed political history of the Early Classic period at a few sites such as Tikal, Uaxactun, Palenque, and Copán.

Stelae

The earliest Early Classic (Cycle 8) stelae are found at Tikal and sites close to this preeminent center. At Tikal, the earliest monument, Stela 29, contains a date of 4 July A.D. 292. Unlike Late Classic examples, early stelae were mainly pictorial representations that only briefly discussed prominent individuals, events, or intra-site relations. The emblem glyph, which may refer to the title *ahaw*, the noble lineage, the city itself, or the wider polity, is the most prevalent aspect of these monuments. In addition to emblem glyphs, stelae inscriptions at Tikal and Uaxactun record a series of dynastic affairs, such as births, accessions, and blood sacrifices, and political events, such as major battles, katun completions, and conquests (Martin and Grube 2000, Mathews 1985, Schele and Freidel 1990). These monuments illustrate clearly the presence of noble rulers and outline the spheres of influence, albeit small in regional scope, at this time (Mathews 1985).

Few sites outside large centers display Early Classic texts, and if they do, many lack the detailed hieroglyphic texts found on stelae at Tikal. Thus little is known about the development, organization, and political relations at smaller, peripheral sites. It should also be remembered

that focusing too narrowly on monuments to reconstruct Early Classic relations ignores the problem of interpretation of historical texts. As Marcus (1992:10) points out, these texts must be seen as propaganda by nobles whose goal was to influence the attitudes of a specific target group. Texts should be one of many data sets used to reconstruct the processes involved in early statecraft and kingship.

Palaces

It is widely accepted that palaces were a common feature of Early Classic sites (Sharer 1994:630). Palaces are identified by their elongated multi-roomed, masonry corbel arched structures that usually sit elevated above the ground surface on low platforms. Typically rooms possess benches, doorway niches, and small windows which have lead researchers to interpret them as residential rather than administrative buildings. Not all palaces, especially those lacking benches, were elite residences, but served as meeting rooms, *audiencias*, and storage (Henden 2000). More detailed investigations using chemical and artifact analyses are required to understand the range of activities performed within them.

Further investigations are also required to understand the timing of palace construction within sites, since few of these buildings have been the focus of intense investigations. For instance, at Uaxactun a major palace complex, Structure A-V, was not used in Tzakol times as a residence, but functioned as a necropolis until the early part of the Late Classic (A. L. Smith 1950:25-26). A second palace complex, Structure B-II, was not excavated but its exposed wall and vaults were examined. From the type of masonry and general plan, Smith (1950:50) candidly speculated it was built in the Vault I stage. At Tikal, although the North Acropolis necropolis was extensively investigated by the University of Pennsylvania project, the residential Central Acropolis received far less work (Coe and Haviland 1982). Harrison (1999:73) suggests that as early as the 4th century this architectural complex contained residential palaces that were built as family houses but also functioned as ceremonial and administrative rooms. "Palaces" that fronted directly onto the Great Plaza may have been set aside solely as administrative rooms, while some situated in more restrictive locations may have served as royal chapels. Although the Central Acropolis undoubtedly was the location of the high royal court for centuries, the role these buildings played in the Early Classic is unclear. Early palace structures at Palenque are likewise little understood (Robertson 1983). Parts of the famous palaces on the upper terrace were first built during the reign of Pacal's grandmother, who reigned from A.D. 583 to 604 during the final years of the Early Classic. Earlier structures, known as *subterraneos*, built on the lower terrace are quite different from those of the later superimposed palaces. These earliest buildings consisted of three long parallel structures whose vaults are very low and wall construction crude and thick. Little is known about the date or function of these early buildings.

Although archaeologists agree there were Early Classic "palaces," little is known about their detailed histories and developments. Much less is known about their function. More research must be conducted to understand the context and timing of their construction, and the role they played in Early Classic political economy.

Pottery

The Early Classic pottery complex was first defined at Holmul by Vaillant (1927; Merwin and Vaillant 1932), who named its phases Holmul I through III based on whole pottery vessels from

tombs. Holmul I contains, along with various pottery styles of "Maya traditions," distinctive bowls with globular tetrapod supports, bowls with annular bases, and vessels with spouts which the Merwin and Vaillant associated with foreign influences, possibly from Salvador or Guatemala (1932:62). Holmul II vessels were considered to be closely connected in style with the Homul I complex, but new styles were introduced including the use of black lacquer (Petén Gloss) and effigy scutate lids (1932:66). Holmul III was considered to be highly stylized and sophisticated, and Merwin and Vaillant describe an assemblage composed of basal flange bowls and vessels with ample decorations including incised naturalistic images, polychrome painting, stucco coating. Although polychrome painting existed in Holmul I, it appears to be more prevalent in Holmul III, however, by this time, tetrapod legs disappear (1932:67-68).

R. E. Smith (1955) relied on Vaillant's scheme as a framework for describing the Tzakol 1 through 3 phases at Uaxactun. Today, the Uaxactun sequence is considered the definitive work on Early Classic ceramics. According to Smith (1955:23) the traits that establish Tzakol 1 are "basic in the shaping" of later Tzakol assemblages (Tzakol 2 and 3). Important diagnostic attributes of each phase are summarized in Table 1.

As succinct as Smith's scheme appears to be from Table 1, Lincoln (1985) suggests it has limited use value. He claims that Smith provided only minimal quantitative description and tabulation of the data -- data that are critical for distinguishing between the Tzakol phases in the field. More damaging, he suggests that the stratigraphic integrity of the three Tzakol phases are questionable since ceramic typology charts in the 1955 document contain different sherd totals for the Tzakol 1, 2 and 3 phases. Despite these difficulties, Lincoln was able to use the data in order to argue for the existent of Chicanel types in Tzakol phase assemblages. The frequency of Chicanel types in Early Classic assemblages are important pieces of information for identifying between Late Formative and Early Classic complexes.

Here is the crux of the difficulty with using traditional ceramic reports. Most ceramic reports emphasize the differences rather than the continuity within ceramic traditions. This perspective leads to the creation of new types, wares, and complexes, which in turn justifies the existence of a new period (Lincoln 1985). In the field, the ceramicist is confronted with a different picture than what is presented in the reports. Excavation lots do not contain these ideal assemblages. Many lots are profoundly mixed because of deliberate cultural processes -- rubbish is mixed in the daily household activities of ancient people or it is used as construction matter. Even in those cases where there is little evidence of cultural mixing, excavation lots are composed of only a few "diagnostics" (those important temporal markers) and a vast array of non-diagnostics (those ceramics that exhibit long-term stylistic and formal modes). Archaeologists must begin to recognize the importance of these non-diagnostics as an integral part of ancient ceramic assemblages and tabulate their frequencies in a consistent manner.

Despite the fact that much more work needs to be done to describe Early Classic ceramic assemblages, some temporal diagnostics are clearly well known. Early Classic pottery is best know by its elaborately painted and polished elite styles including distinctive basal flange bowls, Petén Gloss black ware, and polychrome painted serving vessels. Similarities among highly decorated pottery types at many lowland Maya sites lend evidence for close cultural interaction

among polity rulers. The question becomes what does the Early Classic period look like outside these Petén centers where decorated pottery is few and far between.

As invaluable monument texts are, they present a "top-down" view of relations and events that took place at a few large centers. New research must investigate the economic and social underpinnings of power, in addition to addressing the scope of political influence during the Early Classic period (see Willey and Mathews 1985). House mound excavations at a hinterland site, like Actuncan, will allow a "bottom-up" view of how a ruling lineage may have stabilized its kingly positions by expanding its authority over the production and distribution of staple and wealth goods.

Belize Valley Early Classic

Initial colonization of the valley began as early as 1000 B.C., a time period associated with the Early Formative. Scholars suggest that the area was rapidly settled by pioneers moving from the coast up major rivers where pockets of farm land could be found (Awe 1992; Hammond 1991). Populations grew steadily and dispersed evenly in the upper Belize valley during the Middle and Late Preclassic. By the close of the Preclassic (Terminal Late Preclassic or Proto-Classic), a sudden population increase and major shifts in artifacts styles were observed at Barton Ramie, the most systematically studied area in the valley (Willey et al. 1965). Willey and Gifford (1961) interpreted this rapid expansion and development at the threshold of the Classic period as a radical political and social transformation of Maya society. Sites with distinctive Preclassic pottery styles, Mamon and Chicanel, can be found across the valley at Blackman Eddy (Garber 1997), Cahal Pech (Awe 1992), Buenavista (Taschek and Ball 1999), Pacbitun (Healey 1990), and Xunantunich (LeCount 1996).

The Early Classic in the upper Belize valley, however, is an enigma. Although archaeologists assume large sites contain an Early Classic component, few centers have major building episodes that date to this time period. The apparent decline in valley occupation after the Late Preclassic may be result of a hiatus in civic building projects. Warfare, political or economic stress could have forced the abandonment of many smaller centers and population aggregation at a few large sites. It is also possible that researchers know so little about the Early Classic in the upper Belize valley that its archaeological signature has yet to be recognized. Current research focuses predominately on the Preclassic emergence or the Late Classic disintegration of Maya power. Few researchers appear interested in the interim time period when power was centralized and authority was institutionalized. This focus is understandable given the nature of the archaeological record. When identified, Early Classic components are found buried under massive Late Classic civic architecture, obscured or obliterated by later additions. As a result, no distinct architectural features or site layout patterns have been identified for the Early Classic. As a consequence, archaeologists must rely upon artifactual data to reconstruction this period.

Early Classic diagnostics are notoriously scarce. Four early stelae have been found in upper Belize valley sites including those at Actuncan (Grube and McGovern 1995), Cahal Pech (Awe et al. 1995), Blackman Eddy (Garber 1992), and Floral Park (the "Young Gal" stela found in a near-by field by a landowner and presented to J. Awe in 2000). With the exception of the Blackman Eddy stela, these monuments have been assigned to the Terminal Late Formative or

assigned to this period based solely on their rounded edge and fluidly carved sculptural style, not by long count date.

Gifford (1976:153) first identified Early Classic ceramic markers for the valley based on cross-site comparisons of Barton Ramie collections to those from central Petén capitals such as Tikal and Uaxactun. These are listed in Table 2.

According to Gifford (1976:154) fifty mounds at Barton Ramie contained enough Early classic pottery to suggest they were occupied at this time. The pattern of occupation for the period is the same as that for Floral Park, that is to say all parts of the site were inhabited (Willey et al. 1965:285). Thirty of the 50 occupations were probably related to modification of previously inhabited mounds. Interestingly, only five features can be singled out as having been solely identified as Early Classic. Features dating to the Early Classic period include BR-1 (Structure F), BR-123 (Building level G), and BR-64, BR-135, and BR-151, which show small building fill layers and floors. Eleven others have construction levels that are either Floral Park, Hermitage, or transitional levels. Fourteen others have features dated to somewhere between Floral Park and Tiger Run periods. Apparently, there were many excavation lots that merely contained Early Classic diagnostics, but were mixed with other materials.

Early Classic pottery is noted for its elaborately decorated styles including distinctive basal flange bowls, Petén Gloss black ware, polychrome painted serving vessels, and stucco decoration. Because Barton Ramie styles were very similar to those at Tikal, Gifford (1976:191) suggests that either decorated pottery was traded to the people of Barton Ramie from Tikal or it was made by craftsmen who must have been schooled in the Petén. Both interpretations would have signaled closely-knit elite interaction. However, he contradicts himself when he states that every Hermitage period house mound deposit contained numerous examples of the best Petén-related ceramics. Given this pattern, he attached no special social or religious orientation to these elite pottery types. Gifford (1976:191) thought that there was no overlap in utility wares, and that Barton Ramie potters made their own monochrome orange and red, striated, and unslipped ceramics.

Despite the fact that prestige ceramics and stelae are highly recognizable in the archaeological record and indicate far reaching elite interaction, they can not be relied upon as the only means to identify Early Classic sites nor reconstruct social and political organization. By defining Early Classic occupation with elite cultural markers, archaeologists overlook the majority of the population. Ancient Maya society was organized into a series of internally ranked lineages that cross cut social strata (Hendon 1991), the vast majority of which were commoners that lived within an urban settling but also in rural communities unattached to elite society. Little wonder Early Classic pottery diagnostics, which are prestige goods, are generally found confined to civic centers or wealthy households. Even in these contexts, they are found co-mingled in construction fill with pottery from other complexes. Mixed deposits limit our ability to fully characterize the ceramic complex and recognize commonly occurring diagnostics necessary to identify the scale and scope of Early Classic components.

Actuncan

Actuncan is arguably the most architecturally impressive Late Preclassic site in the upper Belize valley (Figure 1). The center is situated on a long, low ridge overlooking the Mopán river valley and is considered the ancestral shrine of the Late Classic capital of Xunantunich (Ashmore and Leventhal 1993). Located on the eastern periphery of the central Petén, the site was well placed on the landscape to take part in the kinds of cultural, political, and social reorganizations occurring at Tikal and other centers during the Early Classic. Excavations at the site by James McGovern, working under the auspices of the Xunantunich Archaeological Project (XAP) from 1992 to 1994, greatly expanded our knowledge of the developmental trajectory of this important site. Based on his survey of the ridge top, McGovern (1993) divided the site into two sections: Actuncan South (the well known Preclassic triadic structure) and Actuncan North (the previously "undiscovered" Classic center). McGovern (1992, 1993, 1994) conducted limited excavations across the site and produced a new map.

Actuncan South

The Late Preclassic component of the site consists of three pyramids (Structures 4, 5 and 6) aligned in a triadic configuration. The largest of these three pyramids, Structure 4, is surmounted by a second set of three pyramids arranged in a U-shaped pattern. Both sets of triadic pyramids define and focus attention on Plaza A. This "Capitoline" arrangement (von Faulkenhausen 1985:120) rests on a man-made platform that is approximately 72 by 120 m in size. This "temple" complex rises 32 m above the surrounding terrain. My analysis of the ceramics from test pits and looter's trenches for the Xunantunich Archaeological Project led me to suggest that the substructure platform for Actuncan South was initially constructed in the Middle Preclassic, with the bulk of the triadic superstructures built in the Late Preclassic. A carved monument, Stela 1, was erected in front of the largest structure in Plaza A presumably at this time (Grube and McGovern 1995). In the Early Classic, modification to the terraced and sloped façade included the addition of polychrome painted stucco masks similar in style to those found at the royal acropolis at Tikal. Late and Terminal Classic alterations are also indicated.

Actuncan North

North of Plaza A are civic plazas, pyramids, and residential structures little known before 1992. Plaza A is connected to the northern portion of the site by a wide causeway which opens into Plaza C, a large formal civic zone complete with a ball court (Structures 13 and 14), range structures (Structures 12 and 19), and pyramids (Structures 15, 23, and 31) some as tall as 8 m. Smaller plazas (D, E, and F) to the north and east, also contain civic buildings and possibly elite residential compounds. House mounds, associated with low platforms and little formal stone architecture, are located to the extreme north and west of the civic center. The overall architectural layout of the northern civic center and the sprawl of settlement suggest a long developmental history culminating in the Late Classic.

Unlike Actuncan South, much of Actuncan North appears to have undergone a period of growth in the Early Classic period. The developmental sequence is well documented in the forty-four test pits McGovern (1993 and 1994) placed into 8 civic structures (Table 3). My analysis found that Early Classic materials were present in substantial quantities in 32 of the 44 test units. Although none of the structures appear to have been built entirely in the Early Classic, four out

of eight were substantially modified during this time (Structures 13, 15, 19A, and 26). Four other structures were built on top Early Classic surfaces or middens (Structures 12, 18, 28, and 29). Based on this sample, we can safely say that the civic center was heavily utilized and activity being constructed during the Early Classic period. Those structures that predate the Early Classic period appear to have been initially constructed in the Late Preclassic period, and not the Middle Preclassic, although these diagnostics are readily abundant in the fill. Actuncan may have been one of a few surviving centers in the upper Belize valley where people aggregated at this time.

Unfortunately, excavations at Actuncan did not yield pottery that could be used to characterize the Early Classic assemblage. Most test pits were placed in large civic architecture near the base of the mound, although some were placed on top of platforms. In both circumstances, most excavations stopped at the last occupation surface. Rarely did McGovern penetrate the construction fill of civic architecture. In those cases in which the façade was breached and earlier deposits were exposed, the temporal sequence of civic construction is unclear. Sample lots were found to reveal assemblages containing a wide range of temporal diagnostics, many of which could not be assigned to a specific time period.

FIELD METHODOLOGY AND EXCAVATIONS

The first field season focused on retrieving chronological data from Actuncan that will help clarify the Early Classic period in the upper Belize valley. Relative dating is the backbone of most archaeological sequences, and therefore the first priority of the Actuncan Early Classic Maya Project. In order to place the ceramic complex within a long temporal sequence, excavations were placed in locations that would have a high probability of finding finely stratified deposits and abundant pottery for seriation. Abundant sherd material from continuous floor and fill levels are considered the best sample to seriate ceramic diagnostics and identify the full range of ceramic types and forms, both elite and common wares, associated with this time period. Carbon samples were also collected for absolute dating purposes. These Actuncan radiocarbon dates will be added to the list of 22 samples recovered from Xunantunich (LeCount et al. n.d.), and will help narrow the time span archaeologists associate with Early Classic period. The association of absolute dates with the relative ceramic sequence will fix a temporal range for the Early Classic period. Ultimately, the ceramic complex will be securely placed within a developmental sequence. These data will lead to a better understanding of the types that characterize the Classic period, and will help clarify the social and political development of the entire upper Belize valley region.

Four test pits, 1 x 2 m in size, were placed in three *plazuelas*, multiple mounds arranged around a plaza. The Actuncan *plazuelas* (AP-1, AP-2, and AP-3) that were chosen to be excavated this year are located around Plaza G on the northern edge of the site. One-by-two meter units, rather than one-by-ones, were dug in order to retrieve adequate pottery sample sizes. Three out of the four units were placed at the junctions of platforms, within the plaza area, where stratified trash

deposits have been found in other upper Belize valley sites (Chase 1992, 1993; Robin 1999; Yaeger 2000). Excavations in the corners of *plazuelas* by members of the Xunantunich Archaeological Project consistently revealed long, finely layered sequences. At Actuncan, AP-1, AP-2, and AP-3 appeared to be the best locations for yielding similar stratigraphy. These *plazuelas* are multiple mound groups arranged around plazas and presumably, were associated with large, long-term households that should provide abundant ceramic and radiocarbon samples. One of the units (AP-1, unit B) was placed on the opposite side of the mound (on the exterior of the structure), in order to compare the two contexts. In other words, we wanted to determine if the depositional history of the exterior platform unit was similar to that of the interior plaza unit on the opposite side of the platform. We also wanted to view the nature of preservation of the exterior walls and to determine if middens were allowed to accumulate over long-term time.

Excavation procedures allowed XAP guidelines and recording procedures that have proven effective in documenting archaeological remains. The excavation team consisted of three men from San José de Succotz: two experienced excavators and a less experienced assistant who removed and screened the excavation matrix. Shovels were used to excavate fill material, but trowels were used for floor, features, and other special contexts. All matrixes, including fill, were screened through a 1/4" screen and all cultural remains were collected. No soil (for flotation or chemical analyses) was collected this year. Lots were excavated in natural levels (by obvious stratigraphic layers). Excavations continued until sterile soil was reached.

The recording system employed was the operation/sub-operation/lot provenience system. Features, such as burials, caches, or pits, and special finds, such as unique artifacts, received special attention. Artifacts and bones were point-plotted in situ and collected with the utmost care. Plan maps were drawn of each lot or feature and profile and elevation profiles were drawn of each unit. Photographs were taken at the top of each lot to document the archaeological remains (unless there was no noticeable color change, features, or important soil matrixes). Excavation unit corners were tied into permanent datums (concrete and rebar) for each *plazuela*. These *plazuela* datums will be tied into the original XAP three-dimension grid of the site. Vertical control within the unit was by line levels pulled from datum stakes. Excavation volume of each lot was measure in five-gallon buckets graduated by gallon. If there was too much rock in the lot to estimate volume in this manner, then it was calculated by multiplying the average height, width, and depth of the lot. It was my responsibility to document the excavations using a standard form. At the close of each excavation unit, a summary was written to correlate excavation lots to cultural strata and remains. Profiles and architectural elevations were drawn and photographed. Test pits were back-filled at the completion of the project.

In the laboratory at San José de Succotz, artifacts were washed, sorted by class, counted, and curated in plastic bags labeled by provenience. Counts of objects per artifact class were recorded on computer databases. Collections were stored in fifty-five gallon drums and placed in the laboratory for future analysis.

Excavations

The objectives were the same for all test units. We are interested in determining 1) the construction sequence of each *plauzeula*, 2) the dates of this construction sequence, and 3)

whether there is an Early Classic construction phase. The three largest *plazuelas* were selected for excavation since they were considered to be the best candidates for long-term habitation.

Actuncan Plazuela 1 (AP-1) and Operation 1

Operation 1 excavations focused on Actuncan Plazuela one (AP-1), a multi-mound group centered around a raised patio (Figure 2). The north-south oriented *plazuela* is composed of four platforms (Structures 59, 20, 61, and 62), one on each side of the patio. AP-1 is the largest *plazuela* on the ridge top. It measures 26.5 m north-south and 25.5 m east-west, and has a maximum height above ground surface of 2.5 m at the NE corner of Structure 59. All platforms raise at least 2 m above the ground surface with the southern platform being the largest in area. Two 2 x 1 m units, A and B, were excavated. Unit A was a 2 m (N-S) by 1 m (E-W) unit in the northwest corner of the patio, located less than 1 m from Structure 59 and less than 1 m east of Structure 62. This unit was placed close to the platforms in order to find intact patio floors or trash packed up against the patio's interior corner. Unit B was a 2 m (E-W) by 1 m (N-S) unit placed to find the western edge of Structure 62 and to locate trash that might have been piled up along the exterior façade of this platform. We placed Unit A on the interior side of Structure 62 and Unit B on the exterior side of the same mound in order to understand the relationship between the building sequence of the mound and the trash accumulated along the exterior facade. This mound group has never been tested, and there appears to have been no looting of the platforms. There are some large holes in the western structure but they are likely from Cohune palm.

The patio unit excavation (Unit A) revealed a long occupational history beginning in the Late Preclassic period and ending in the Terminal Classic period (Figure 3). Overall the patio was raised to its present height in three major construction episodes as exemplified by three thick plaster floors and their associated ballast and subfloor fills. Floor 1 is dated to the Late Classic period (A.D. 600 to 780), Floor 2 is Terminal Late Preclassic (approximately A.D. 0 to 250), and Floor 3 is given a general Late Preclassic period date (approximately 300 B.C. to A.D. 250) based on pottery chronology. Below Floor 3 is a compact yellowish brown living surface also dated to the Late Preclassic. This is probably the original living surface as it lies on a bed of thick and sticky yellow clay without artifacts. Unit B yields ceramic data that confirms this occupational history, although the strata do not relate to the same architectural features (Figure 4). Three floors were also found but they do not correlate one-to-one with the interior patio floors. The only floors that appear to be correlated are Unit A's Floor 1 and Unit B's Floor 3. Both lie at 2.43 m below AP-1 hub datum, but yielded ceramics dated to the Late Preclassic and Terminal Late Preclassic, respectively. Increasing the sample size of ceramics from these two units may resolve this question. Unit A's Floor 2 and Floor 3 are superimposed and date to the Late Preclassic. At the very base of this unit is a Late Preclassic river cobble foundation resting on an undulating bedrock of *sascab* and sticky yellow clay.

Given the limited amount of excavation, it is difficult to reconstruct the architectural development of AP-1 but some information can be gleaned about the construction history of this mound group. There is currently no indication that the patio group was modified in the Terminal Classic. Only a few Terminal Classic ceramic diagnostics were found on the surface of the *plazuela*. However, the *plazuela* underwent substantial modification in the Late Classic II period. In Unit A, over 55 cm of collapse was found lying on Floor 1. This collapse contained

many worked architectural limestone blocks mainly derived from Structure 59 based on the clustering of these shaped blocks in the northern portion of the unit. The collapse matrixes also contained very large quantities of Late Classic II ceramics, lithics, daub, and other artifacts. These data indicate that Structure 59 held a stone superstructure (but probably not a corbelled-arched structure since no cap stones were located) and likely functioned as a habitation room. Structure 62 also held a Late Classic perishable superstructure that sat on a river cobble foundation (Wall 3), at most two courses high. Excavations in Unit B uncovered a 10-cm thick layer of Late Classic occupation debris sitting on an internal floor abutting the river cobble foundation (Figure 5). The interior floor of Structure 59 dates to the Late Classic period. Both Classic floors (the patio floor and the structure floor) were very eroded and thin, no more than a couple centimeters thick.

The substructure of the western mound (Structure 59) underwent expansion during the Late Classic II period. Excavation on the western edge of the mound (Unit B) revealed a Late Classic II platform wall (Wall 2) and a possible step (Wall 1). Approximately 10 cm of Late Classic II occupation debris was found sloping away from Wall 2, beneath which underlay an additional 10 to 15 cm of Late Classic debris. When the Maya constructed Wall 2 they cut through this underlying Late Classic debris to place the new platform wall on a solid foundation (Floor 1). The façade of the Late Classic II substructure (Wall 2) is unimpressive. The remaining three courses are composed of river cobbles and small shaped limestone blocks approximately 20 to 30 cm high. It is obvious that this wall was much taller, but has collapsed to expose the core in many places. The distance between the façade wall (Wall 2) and the possible step (Wall 1) is 33 cm. It too is constructed of limestone blocks and river cobbles, but it is only two courses high. Wall 1 does not lie on the same surface as Wall 2, and given its unconsolidated nature, further excavations are needed to confirm my interpretation that this is indeed an actual step and not just wall collapse.

The last patio floor (Floor 1) might have been constructed in the early portion of the Late Classic, the Late Classic I period. This floor is about 3 cm thick and consists of packed *cal* on top of small cobbles and pebbles. This ballast is about 10 cm thick and contained no diagnostics that could be definitively placed in the Late Classic II period. Below this ballast is large cobble and stone fill, approximately 35 cm deep. It contains substantial Late Preclassic and Early Classic material and no definitive Late Classic diagnostics, also lending evidence that Floor 1 was constructed in the early part of the Late Classic. This fill rested on patio Floor 2 (Terminal Late Preclassic) and a set of shaped limestone slabs that acted as crypt covers to Burials 1 and 2.

Two burial crypts were found cut into the Terminal Late Preclassic patio Floor 2. Burial 1 was almost totally confined to Unit B with only a small portion of the crypt extending into the southern sidewall. Burial 2, on the other hand, was almost entirely outside the unit, extending northward toward Structure 59. Because of time limitations we did not excavate Burial 2, and left it pedestalled in the unit. Both crypts appear to be very similar in construction technique, and well coordinated, that is to say, they do not overlap or impinge upon each other. The crypts were arranged in a relatively straight line, only 25 cm apart, and oriented due north-south. Because of this alignment, it is possible that they were constructed at the same time. But it is also possible that the crypt's capstones were exposed during the occupation of the patio group, and the ancient Maya knew exactly where their ancestors were buried. The capstones are large and well shaped,

and placed across the entire top of the crypt. In this way, additional burials could have been easily placed in the sacred space of the patio without disturbing previously interred individuals.

Burial one's crypt was defined on the east and western sides by upright slabs of shaped limestone, and the crypt was no larger than the body itself (Figure 6a). The internal width of the crypt ranges between 25 and 30 cm. The body lies on patio Floor 3, making this crypt approximately 30 cm high from the bottom of the capstones to the top of plaza floor (Figure 6b). The burial is a single adult laying face down with its head to the south. Its right hand and arm is behind the back. The left arm may be also in this position, but the burial is too poorly preserved to determine this without more detailed osteological analysis. Bones of the chest and pelvis were found pulverized, and those above the chest are beneath the capstones in the south end wall of the unit. We did not extend the excavation to the south to retrieve the cranium at this time. The lower legs were crossed with the right leg behind the left ankle. Flanges of the right foot can be identified. Leg bones are fairly well preserved. A small brown vessel rested "mouth-up" on top of the toes; this vessel has yet to be assigned a type-variety name because it is unique. The vessel is a lid. It is hemispherical in shape and has a bird effigy adorno knob (Figure 7). Two wings and a tail were made of slabs and affixed to the shoulder of the pot. The vessel is broken, but has been reconstructed. There is possibly a "kill-hole" in the side. Because of the unique form of this vessel, it was interned lying upside-down rather than right-side up. It contained charcoal in the "bottom of the bowl" as if it was used for a burnt offering. No other burial goods were found; however, the shoulders and cranium have yet to be excavated.

Based on the style of the effigy lid, this burial probably dates to the middle portion of the Early Classic. Merwin and Vaillant (1932: plates 26a and 27a-c) illustrate similar plain effigy covers found in the earliest Holmul III burials. These parrot and dog effigy covers are found in association with other Early Classic styles such as black lacquer (Balanza Black) and polychrome basal flange bowls (Merwin and Vaillant 1932:94). They describe similar styles that appear in the masonry of Temple E-VII at Uaxactun. At Uaxactun, R. E. Smith (1955:Fig. 29d-i) illustrates the same kind of hemispherical lids with bird effigy knobs, and assigns them to the Tzakol 2 phase. Tzakol 3 phase effigy lids at Uaxactun appear different in form, and are "apron" shaped with distinct concave sides and flat top. These apron covers are found in association with cylinder tripods. Culbert illustrates a Tikal hemispherical cover with a bird effigy (1993:Figure 16c), and places it in the Manik Ceramic Complex. Giving a more specific date to these hemispherical lids, other than a general Early Classic period date of A.D. 250 to 600, would mean relying on the tenuous schemes proposed for subdividing Holmul and Tzakol periods into three phases.

There are no other lots that can be assigned to the Early Classic period. Although there are many lots that contain plain slipped basal flanges, none, other than Burial 1 and the fill above it, can be definitively dated to the Early Classic period.

The Late Preclassic, like the Late Classic, is well represented in AP-1 and can be subdivided by pottery styles. The Terminal Late Preclassic -- defined by the presence of medial flanges, some incipient basal flanges, Z-angles, and those attributes assigned to the Floral Park assemblage -- is associated with three sets of constructions. The earliest Terminal Late Preclassic construction was the building of the initial patio floor (Unit B's Floor 1 and Unit A's Floor 3). In Unit B, this

initial patio floor was found underneath Structure 59 and to the west of it. Second, the subplatform of Structure 59 was built on top of the initial patio floor. And lastly, the inner patio courtyard was raised and paved with a new patio floor (Unit A's Floor 2). All this construction appears to have been achieved during the Terminal Late Preclassic, when the number of house platforms increased and the patio group became more enclosed and focused inward, like its Classic period layout.

There has been much gnashing of teeth concerning the integrity of the "Proto-classic" or Terminal Late Preclassic Ceramic Complex. Forsyth (1989:51) states that the "Proto-classic" Floral Park Complex was originally considered to be a differentiable class of pottery that replaced, or at least was separable from the Late Preclassic Complex, Mount Hope. The Floral Park Complex, with its Aguacate ceramic group, mammiform tripod feet, and orange polychromes, was interpreted to be the result of a population intrusion from El Salvador imposing new, foreign style into an existing Maya ceramic tradition. Today, it is seen less as cultural intrusion than a typological problem. Forsyth is very uncomfortable with the whole typology created by the Barton Ramie classification, and questions the validity of groups and types, especially Aguacate. Hopefully, our excavations will help solve some of these issues, but currently we do not have the sample sizes to do so. However, it is possible to say that a Savannah Bank Usulután rim sherd was found below the Early Classic burial in a feature cut into patio Floor 3, which is dated to the Late Preclassic. This would place the sherd in the correct stratigraphic position as suggested by Gifford. Other ceramics found in association with the Usulután rim include Sierra Red, Polvera Black, and a punctated brown ware.

The initial occupation of AP-1 is associated with Late Preclassic, Barton Creek Complex, materials. Below the initial floor in the patio courtyard unit (A), we found a layer of packed clay and *cal* that we associated with the earliest occupation surface. Below this was gritty yellow brown clay with pulverized limestone inclusions almost devoid of artifacts, albeit those we found were unspecified waxy wares. We terminated the lot at a solid and sticky yellowish brown clay deposit. In the western unit (B), we found much more evidence of occupation that suggests that through time, the focus of the patio group shifted eastward. Under the initial patio Floor (Floor 1) were two more floors (Floor 2 and 3) that were superimposed in the eastern section of the unit. Both are patchy and no more than 10 cm in depth. Floor 3 was very interesting; it consists of a friable mix of *sascab* chunks and powdery burnt and crushed *cal*. In the southeast corner, there are some heavily burned patches that have turned red or ash gray. In the western portion of the unit it is interspersed with stiff yellowish clay, and the floor may actually be non-existent in this area. This first floor is found on top of, and in places embedded into, a cobble stone foundation that runs east to west across the unit counter to the Classic period patio group that rests on top of it. The foundation is only one course high, and Floor 3 continues below the tops of the stones on either side of it, but especially on the south side of the wall. The foundation stone may form a corner at the western end wall of the unit where a more elongated stone appears to be set perpendicular to the round river cobbles. This foundation rests on natural *sascab* bedrock that unglutates across the unit. The small amount of artifacts associated with this early foundation do not appear to be Middle Preclassic in age, but may be placed somewhere in the Late Preclassic.

Actuncan Plazuela 2 (AP-2) and Operation 2

Plazuela 2 is a three-mound group centered around a patio on the southern periphery of Plaza G (Figure 8). It consists of Structures 50, 51, and 52 that define the east, north, and west sides of the patio, respectively. The patio is open to the south, and thus the *plazuela* is oriented towards the largest pyramidal-range structure complex (Structures 19 through 25) in Actuncan North. Like AP-1, AP-2 is nearly square and oriented 19.0 m north-south and 19.5 m east-west. The elevation at datum hub is 1.50 m above the ground surface, but the western edge of Structure 52 rises approximately 2.5 m above the ground surface. A single 1 x 2 m test pit (Unit A) was placed in the patio where it straddles the platform façade of Structure 51 and is less than 1 m east of Structure 52. The specific objectives for placing this unit in this location was to determine the construction sequences of the patio and Structure 51, and to determine if there was an Early Classic construction phase.

Although the sample is small, it appears that Structure 51 and patio was constructed almost entirely in the Late Classic (Figure 9). Within the first 5 cm, large shaped limestone capstones of Structure 51's platform were exposed. These large stones might have been the upper course of façade on the southern side of the platform. The platform wall façade was very well made with shaped limestone blocks. The top course exhibits large capstones, the largest being 41 x 20 x 11 cm in size. This top course overhangs the lower two courses made from smaller shaped limestone blocks. The core material from the platform dates to the Late Classic II period. The patio floor runs underneath this wall, and may date to the Late Classic I period. On top of this floor is Late Classic II occupation material that appears to be packed up against the wall. Below the 6 cm thick *cal* floor is ballast that consists of limestone chunks and chert pebbles. Below that is 40 cm of very large rock fill consisting of smaller stones at the top and larger river cobbles at the bottom. The rock fill is so coarse that the dirt falls between stones and settles at the bottom in a grainy, loose matrix. Although sherd material is scarce, it is predominately Late Preclassic but there are enough Late Classic diagnostics to date this construction to the Late Classic, probably the Late Classic I.

This Late Classic patio rests on a 20 cm thick occupation surface of compact brown clay. Ceramic diagnostics include a basal flange bowl and possibly a weathered Balanza black sherd, which leads me to believe this initial occupation surface dates to the Early Classic. This initial occupation surface is underlain by irregular *sascab* bedrock.

Actuncan Plazuela 3 (AP-3) and Operation 3

Actuncan Plazuela 3 is a northwest to southeast trending patio group located on the northeastern periphery of Plaza G (Figure 10). It consists of three low mounds (Structures 45, 46, and 47) around a patio. The northerly mound (Structure 47) is the tallest at 1.4 m above ground level at the northern end where the topography of the ridge begins to slope more dramatically off the hill top. The southern mound (Structure 45) and the western mound (Structure 46) are less than 1 m high. The patio is open to the east. The northwest-southeast axis of the *plazuela* is 20 m long and the width is 15.0 m. The datum hub sits 1.9 m above the ground surface on Structure 47. A single 1 x 2 m test pit was placed in the patio of AP-3. The unit's western wall is less than 1 m from the eastern façade of Structure 46 and the northern endwall is less than 1 m from Structure 47. Since we had very little time, we decided to date the patio construction only.

Most of the AP-3 patio was built in the Late Classic (Figure 11). The modern surface is highly disturbed by cattle and therefore it was difficult to find the last patio floor. But because of the high amount of limestone pebbles we found in the first excavation lot, it probably lies within 5 cm of the present day surface. The fill below this eroded floor contains large amounts of artifacts, river cobbles, and limestone blocks dating to the Late Classic II. More cobbles were found in the southwest corner of the unit, probably from the wall fall from the structures to the north and west of it. Below this fill is a 20 cm thick layer of compact loamy clay with lots of limestone chunks and fairly small artifacts including groundstone, slate, and jutes, which indicates household activities. This was probably occupation material used as in situ fill. It also dates to the Late Classic II.

Early Classic occupation is more noticeable in AP-3 than in AP-2. Here, sitting on a very eroded floor (Floor 1) is a thin layer of occupation material, possibly dated to the Early Classic. The floor is very patchy, and only well preserved in the eastern corner of the unit. Below it, there is very dense, compact, yellowish brown clay with flecks of limestone and very little rock. Although this material acts as fill, it is probably in situ occupation debris used as ballast for the first floor. This material contains Late Preclassic and possibly Early Classic material. It is underlain by sticky yellow clay sterile of cultural debris.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We are pleased with the amount of work that was accomplished in the first field season of the Actuncan Early Classic Maya Project. Although we tested only 3 of the 6 *plazuelas* in the northern section of Actuncan, we can begin to reconstruct a developmental history for this site based on our work this summer and McGovern's initial excavations.

Our crew excavated 12.915 m³ of cultural material this field season. By far the greatest volume of cultural material is associated with the Late Classic II period (4.317 m³), followed by the Early Classic (3.25 m³), the Late Classic I (2.79 m³), the Late Preclassic (1.51 m³), and the Terminal Late Preclassic (1.04 m³). Like most sites in the Upper Belize Valley, the great bulk of the domestic architecture we excavated at Actuncan this season appears to have been built either in the Late Classic II period or Late Preclassic (including the Terminal phase). Although half of the monumental architecture in the northern civic core appears to have been built in the Early Classic, domestic mounds show little evidence of construction during this time. Most of the material we assigned to the Early Classic is considered occupation debris or living surface, not building fill. What is interesting about the Early Classic material in the northern portion of the site, is precisely the context. In AP-2 and AP-3, Early Classic material is associated with the initial occupation levels (clay living surfaces or floors), but not with substantial architecture like platforms. Only at the largest plazuela, AP-1, is there Early Classic architecture.

Where did the Early Classic inhabitants who built Actuncan live? It could be suggested that although there is considerable civic building during the Early Classic period, few people actually lived at the site. The supporting population might have lived spread across the valley in

dispersed farmsteads yet to be detected by archaeologists. This situation is clearly evident at Xunantunich, where the number of Late Classic domestic buildings is very small in comparison to the amount of civic architecture. Most of the Late Classic population lived in smaller communities, like San Lorenzo (Yaeger 2000), Chaa Creek (Connell 2000), and the Chan site (Robin 1999), surrounding the center. However, we think it is premature to assume that there was a small resident Early Classic population at Actuncan. It could be argued that the vast majority of Early Classic domestic structures have yet to be found. Early Classic domestic structures might have been covered over by Late Classic civic constructions. Larger horizontal excavations would be required to test this hypothesis.

It is also possible that Early Classic domestic structures are more ephemeral than Late Classic plazuelas. Early Classic houses might have been perishable structures built directly on the clay living surface. If Early Classic people were refugee populations aggregating into a few centers, as suggested by some Mayanists, then this type of construction would make sense. It would also explain the lack of fancy Early Classic pottery in these new, and rather impoverished, households.

This brings us back to the question of Early Classic pottery. Why is it so rare in small domestic structures? Why are some forms, like basal flange bowls, and types, like Balanza Black, found in civic constructions and burials, but not in other contexts? Are Late Preclassic waxy wares an integral component of the Early Classic pottery assemblage?

These are questions that require detailed analysis of pottery samples and the correlation of radiocarbon dates with pottery samples from secure stratigraphic sequences. Currently, we do not have these data. In the very short lab time we had this summer, LeCount quickly sorted through all the excavation lots and assigned phase designations to each (Table 4). What can be suggested from our brief work at Actuncan this summer is that household pottery assemblages might look vastly different than those assemblages used in public civic ceremonies and elite contexts. Although we found Petén Gloss red and orange wares and plain slipped basal flange bowls, very few Early Classic polychrome sherds or Balanza Black sherds were encountered in domestic contexts. These elaborately decorated serving bowls and cylinder vases are the highly visible Early Classic markers archaeologists have traditionally used to identify this time period. Clearly, there is a need to quantify less "diagnostic" attributes, like rim mode, flange size, and finish hardness, and stop relying on qualitative assessments of ceramic lots based on the presence/absence of polychrome basal flanges. The highly visible, special vessels might have been tightly controlled by elites and used only in certain situations, such as ceremonial feasts and burial rites. Like Lincoln (1985:75), we assume the great mass of lowland commoners had little access to these markers of elite, high culture. Their function might help to explain why these ceramic types are similar in style across the lowlands but are concentrated mainly at select Early Classic capitals, such as Tikal and Uaxactun.

Non-ceramic artifacts -- shell, obsidian, animal bone, ground stone, slate, and special objects -- were counted by provenience (Table 5). Then, they were tabulated by time period, and the resulting frequencies were standardized by total excavation volume (Table 6). As you can see in Table 5, the Early Classic period yielded the highest frequency of obsidian per cubic volume. These data suggest that Actuncan was well connected to Early Classic obsidian trade networks.

Interestingly, the Late Preclassic period has a significantly higher frequency of dietary shell than other periods, and the Terminal Late Preclassic period has the highest frequency of animal bone. These data match well with the recovery of animal remains from the site of Cahal Pech, where Powis and colleagues (1999) found that Preclassic Maya relied more heavily on terrestrial meat resources than their later Classic period descendants. While excavating, we noticed the ubiquitous presence of slate in the excavation lots. Johnny Camal, an experienced excavator and a local slate carver, was quite impressed with the quantity of slate at Actuncan. He stated that it was more prevalent here than at Xunantunich or San Lorenzo, where he had excavated for a number of years. This observation will need to be tested with XAP data. Groundstone also was ubiquitous in the excavation lots, except for those dating to the Late Preclassic period. Its presence is to be expected in *plazuela* excavations. The lack of Late Preclassic groundstone lends evidence to our interpretation that this part of the site was not heavily occupied until the Early Classic period.

Friedel and Schele's model appears to fit the artifactual data. Elites may have regulated those luxury goods, such as polychrome pottery, which were important ritual paraphernalia. However, some things don't work. Where is the evidence for centralized political authority at Actuncan? Although there is a Preclassic stela, where is the royal residence -- that quintessential marker of individual political power? It could be argued that Actuncan's heyday was in the Late Preclassic, and by the Early Classic, the center of regional authority was somewhere else. Buenavista might have been a major center during this time, but certainly not Xunantunich, where there is little evidence of the Early Classic. Naranjo, only 15 km away, is clearly another possibility. But although Actuncan might not have been a paramount center, this scenario doesn't help explain the great amount of Early Classic civic building at the site.

What was the nature of political organization like outside large centers, such as Tikal or Calakmul? Feinman (1998:96) defined archaic states to be composed of rather small, modular components that form multiplicity networks. His definition allows us to think about variability in political organization, not only that which existed among provincial centers (those modular components), but also the nature of the political integration that tied these provincial centers together into an archaic state. How does this model help us understand Actuncan?

Like Maya polities in the Late Formative (Blanton et al 1996:9), Actuncan might have been organized along strong corporate lines. It might have lacked the kind of centralized political structures associated with ruler-centered political hierarchies found at Tikal or Calakmul. Communal rituals may have continued to sanctify and culturally reinforce the egalitarian order and act as a mechanism of social integration. Even if Actuncan was subordinate to a paramount center, Early Classic authority might have continued to be organized along Preclassic parameters. There does appear, however, to be a change toward exclusionary control of politically charged goods, such as polychrome pottery.

It is clear from this season's excavations how much more work needs to be done. Understanding the Early Classic will take both extensive excavations and analysis. Because of the limited scope of this season's work, a second field season will be proposed to continue the testing of house mounds. It has become apparent that the initial phase of this project might extend into multiple seasons.

References

- Abrams, E.
1989 Architecture and Energy: An Evolutionary Perspective. *Archaeological Method and Theory* I: 47-89.
- Adams, R. E. W.
1971 *The Ceramics of Altar de Sacrificios*. Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology 63 (1). Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
- Ashmore, W. and R. M. Leventhal
1993 Xunantunich Reconsidered. Paper presented at the Belize Conference, University of North Florida, Jasonville, March 4-6, 1993.
- Awe, J.
1992 Dawn in the Land between the Rivers: Formative Occupation at Cahal Pech, Belize and its Implications for Preclassic Development in the Maya Lowlands. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Institute of Archaeology, University of London.
- Awe, J., D. Cheetham, and N. Grube
1995 Comentario sobre la Estela 9 de Cahal Pech: Un Monumento Preclasico del Valley del Rio Belice. Paper presented at the Third International Congress of Mayanists, Universidad de Quintana Roo, Chetmul, Mexico, July 1995.
- Baines, John, and Norman Yoffee
1998 Order, Legitimacy, and Wealth in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. In *Archaic States*, edited by Gary Feinman and Joyce Marcus, pp. 199-260. School of American Research Press, Santa Fe.
- Ball, J. W.
1977 *The Archaeological Ceramics of Becan, Campeche, Mexico*. Middle American Research Institute Publication 43. Tulane University, New Orleans.
- Blanton, Richard
1998 Beyond Centralization: Steps Toward a Theory of Egalitarian Behavior in Archaic States. In *Archaic States*, edited by Gary Feinman and Joyce Marcus, pp. 135-172. School of American Research Press, Santa Fe.
- Blanton, R., G. Feinman, S. Kowalewski, and P. Peregrine
1996 A Dual-Processual Theory for the Evolution of Mesoamerican Civilization. *Current Anthropology* 37: 1-14.
- Brumfiel, Elizabeth
1976 *Specialization and Exchange at the Late Postclassic (Aztec) Community of Huexotla, Mexico*. Unpublished dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan.
1980 Specialization, Market Exchange, and the Aztec State: A View from Huexotla. *Current Anthropology* 21:459-78.
- Chase, Arlen, and Diane Chase
1996 More Than Kin and King: Centralized Political Organization among the Late Classic Maya. *Current Anthropology* 37(5):803-830.
- Chase, S.
1993 Excavations at the San Lorenzo Group: The 1993 Testing Program and Plaza Group I. In *Xunantunich Archaeological Project: 1993 Field Season*, edited by R. M. Leventhal, pp.

- 128-147. Los Angeles, CA. and Belmopan.
- 1992 South Group Plaza 1 and Nabitunich Plaza Group. In *Xunantunich Archaeological Project: 1992 Field Season*, edited by R M. Leventhal, pp. 35-55. Los Angeles, CA. and Belmopan.
- Cheetham, David
- 1998 *Interrregional Interaction, Symbol Emulation, and the Emergence of Socio-political Inequality in the Central Maya Lowlands*. Masters thesis, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Trent, University of British Columbia.
- Cheetham, D., J. Aimers, J. Ferguson, D. Lee, L. Delhonde, and A. Jenkins
- 1994 Return to the Suburbs: The Second Season of Investigations at the Zopilote Group, Chal Pech, Belize. In *Belize Valley Archaeological Reconnaissance Project: Progress Report of the Sixth (1993) Field Season*, ed. by J. Awe, pp. 164-175. Institute of Archaeology, University of London, London.
- Coe, M., and W. Haviland
- 1982 *Introduction to the Archaeology of Tikal, Guatemala*. Tikal Report No. 12. Series Editors, W. Coe and W. Haviland. University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.
- Connell, S.
- 2000 *Were They Well Connected? An Exploration of Ancient Maya Regional Integration from the Middle-Level Perspective of Chaa Creek, Belize*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Culbert, T. P.
- 1993 *The Ceramics of Tikal: Vessels From the Burials, Caches and Problematical Deposits*, series editors, W. Coe and W. Haviland. University Museum Monograph 81. University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.
- Demarest, A. A.
- 1992 Ideology in Ancient Maya Cultural Evolution: The Dynamics of Galactic Polities. In *Ideology and Pre-Columbian Civilizations*, edited by A. A. Demarest and G. W. Conrad, pp. 135-158. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- DeMarrais, E, L. Castillo, and T. Earle
- 1996 Ideology, Materialization, and Power Strategies. *Current Anthropology* 37: 15-31.
- D'Altroy, T. N, and T. K. Earle
- 1985 State Finance, Wealth Finance, and Storage in the Inka Political Economy. *Current Anthropology* 26: 187-206.
- de Montmollin, O.
- 1989 *The Archaeology of Political Structure: Settlement Analysis in a Classic Maya Polity*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England.
- Earle, T. K.
- 1991 The Evolution of Chiefdoms. In *Chiefdoms: Power, Economy, and Ideology*, edited by T. K. Earle, pp. 1-15. University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge, Eng.
- Feinman, Gary
- 1998 Scale and Social Organization: Perspectives on the Archaic State. In *Archaic States*, edited by Gary Feinman and Joyce Marcus, pp. 95-134. School of American Research Press, Santa Fe.
- Flannery, K. V.
- 1972 The Cultural Evolution of Civilizations. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 3: 399-426.
- 1998 The Ground Plans of Archaic States. In *Archaic States*, edited by Gary Feinman and Joyce

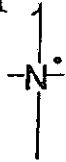
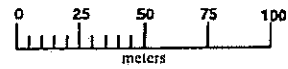
- Marcus, pp. 15-58. School of American Research Press, Santa Fe.
- Ford, Annabel
 1991 Economic Variation of Ancient Maya Residential Settlement in the Upper Belize River Area. *Ancient Mesoamerica* 2:35-46.
- Forsyth, D.
 1989 *The Ceramics of El Mirador, Petén, Guatemala*. El Mirador Series, Part 4. Papers of the New World Archaeological Foundation, No. 63. Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
- Freidel, D.
 1981 Civilization as a State of Mind: the Cultural Evolution of the Lowland Maya. In *The Transition to Statehood in the New World*, edited by G. D. Jones and R. R. Kautz, pp. 188-227, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
 1992 Ideology in Ancient Maya Cultural Evolution. In *Ideology and Pre-Columbian Civilizations*, edited by A. A. Demarest, and G. W. Conrad, pp. 115-134. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Freidel, D., and L. Schele
 1988 Kingship in the Late Preclassic Maya Lowlands: The Instruments and Places of Ritual Power. *American Anthropologist* 90:547-657.
 1989 Dead Kings and Living Temples: Dedication and Termination Rituals among the Ancient Maya. In *Word and Image in Maya Culture: Explorations in Language, Writing, and Representation*, edited by W. F. Hanks and D. S. Rice, pp. 233-243. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City.
- Fried, Morton
 1967 *The Evolution of Political Society*. Random House, New York.
- Garber, James F.
 1992 A Baktun 8 Carved Stela from the Lowland Maya site of Blackman Eddy, Belize. Paper presented at the 57th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Pittsburgh, April 1992.
 1997 *The Belize Valley Archaeology Project: Results of the 1997 Field Season*, edited by J. Garber. Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, TX.
- Garber, J. W., and D. M. Glassman (eds)
 1996 *The Belize Valley Archaeological Project: Results of the 1995 Season*. Southwestern Texas State University, San Marcos.
- Gifford, J.
 1976 *Prehistoric Pottery Analysis and the Ceramics of Barton Ramie in the Belize Valley*. Memoirs of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Vol. 18. Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Grube, Nikolai, and James McGovern
 1995 A Preclassic Stela from Actuncan, Cayo District, Belize. A paper presented at the 61st Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, New Orleans, March 1996.
- Hammond, N.
 1991 Cuello Considered: Summary and Conclusions. In *Cuello: An Early Maya Community in Belize*, edited by N. Hammond, pp. 235-248. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Eng.
- Harrison, Peter
 1999 *The Lords of Tikal: Rulers of an Ancient Maya City*. London, Thames and Hudson.
- Healey, P.
 1990 Excavations at Pacbitun, Belize: Preliminary Report on the 1986 and 1987 Investigations.

- Journal of Field Archaeology* 17: 247-262.
- Hendon, J.
 1991 Status and Power in Classic Maya Society: An Archaeological Study. *American Anthropologist* 93: 894-918.
 2000 Having and Holding: Storage, Memory, Knowledge, and Social Relations. *American Anthropologist* 102(1):42-53.
- Jones, Christopher
 1991 Cycles of Growth at Tikal. In *Classic Maya Political History*, edited by T. P. Culbert, pp. 102-127. SAR, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Mass.
- Jones, C., and L. Satterthwaite
 1982 *The Monuments and Inscriptions of Tikal: The Carved Monuments*. Series Editors, W. Coe and W. Haviland. Tikal Report No 33A. University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
- LeCount, L.
 1996 Pottery and Power: Feasting, Gifting, and Displaying Wealth among the Late and Terminal Classic Lowland Maya. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles.
 1999 Polychrome Pottery and Political Strategies in Late and Terminal Classic Maya Society. *Latin American Antiquity* 10(3): 239-258.
- LeCount, L., J. Yaeger, R. Leventhal, and W. Ashmore
 n.d. Dating the Rise and Fall of Xunantunich, Belize: A Late and Terminal Classic Lowland Maya Secondary Center. *Ancient Mesoamerica*.
- Lincoln, Charles E.
 1985 Ceramics and Ceramic Chronology. In *A Consideration of the Early Classic Period in the Maya Lowlands*, edited by Gordon R. Willey and Peter Mathews, pp. 55- 94. Publication No.10. Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, State University of New York at Albany.
- Marcus, J.
 1992 *Mesoamerican Writing System*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J.
 1993 Ancient Maya Political Organization. In *Peak of Lowland Maya Civilization: New Understandings of Eight Century Maya Development*, edited by J. A. Sabloff and J. S. Henderson, pp. 111-184. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D. C.
- Marcus, Joyce, and Gary Feinman
 1998 Introduction. In *Archaic States*, edited by Gary Feinman and Joyce Marcus, pp. 3-14. School of American Research Press, Santa Fe.
- Martin, Simon, and Nikolai Grube
 2000 *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens*. Thames and Hudson, London.
- Mathews, Peter
 1985 Maya Early Classic Monuments and Inscriptions. In *A Consideration of The Early Classic Period in the Maya Lowlands*, edited Gordon Willey and P. Mathews, pp. 5-54. Publication No.10. Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, State University of New York at Albany.
- McGovern, J.
 1992 1992 Study of Actuncan (Cahal Xux). In *Xunantunich Archaeological Project: 1992 Field Season*, edited by R M. Leventhal, pp. 74-83. Los Angeles, Ca. and Belmopan.
 1993 Survey and Excavation at Actuncan. In *Xunantunich Archaeological Project: 1993 Field*

- Season*, edited by R. M. Leventhal, pp. 100-127. Los Angeles, CA. and Belmopan.
- 1994 Actuncan, Belize: The 1994 Excavation Season. In *Xunantunich Archaeological Project: 1994 Field Season*, edited by R. M. Leventhal, pp. 108-122. Los Angeles, Ca. and Belmopan.
- Merwin, R. E., and G. C. Vaillant
 1932 *The Ruins of Holmul Guatemala*. Memoirs of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Vol. III. No. 2. Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
- Possehl, Gregory
 1998 Sociocultural Complexity Without the State: The Indus Civilization. In *Archaic States*, edited by Gary Feinman and Joyce Marcus, pp. 261-292. School of American Research Press, Santa Fe.
- Powis, T., N. Stanchly, C. White, P Healy, J. Awe, and F Longstaffe
 1999 A Reconstruction of Middle Preclassic Maya Subsistence Economy at Cahal Pech, Belize. *Antiquity* 73:364-76.
- Ricketson, O., and E. Ricketson
 1937 *Uaxactun, Guatemala, Group E, 1926-1937*. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Publication 477.
- Robertson, Merle Green
 1983 *The Sculpture of Palenque. Vol II: The Early Buildings of the Palace and the Wall Paintings*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New York.
- Robin, C.
 1999 Towards an Archaeology of Everyday Life: Ancient Maya Farmers of Chan N'óohl and Dos Chombitos Cikin. Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania.
- Sabloff, J. A.
 1975 *Excavations at Seibal, Department of Peten, Guatemala: Ceramics*. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Memoirs 13 (2). Cambridge, Mass.
- Sanders, W.
 1989 Household, Lineage, and State in Eighth-Century Copan, Honduras. In *The House of the Bacabs, Copán, Honduras*, edited by D. Webster, pp. 89-105. Washington D.C., Dumbarton Oaks.
- Schele, Linda
 1985 The Hauberg Stela: Bloddletting and the Mythos of Classic Maya Rulership. In *Fifth Palenque Round Table 1983, Vol. VII*, edited by V. Fields, pp. 135-151. The Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute.
- Schele, Linda and David Freidel
 1990 *A Forest of Kings*. William Morrow and Company, New York.
- Sharer, R. J.
 1994 *The Ancient Maya*. Fifth edition. Stanford.
- Smith, A. L.
 1950 *Uaxactun, Guatemala, Excavations of 1931-1937*. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Publication 588.
- Smith, R. E.
 1955 *Ceramic Sequence at Uaxactun, Guatemala, 2 Vols*. Middle American Research Institute, Pub. 20, Tulane University, New Orleans.
- Taschek J., and J. Ball

- 1999 Las Ruinas de Arenal. *Ancient Mesoamerica* 10: 215-235.
- Vaillant, G.
1927 *The Chronological Significance of Maya Ceramics*. Unpublished Thesis, Harvard University.
- Willey, Gordon, W. R. Bullard, Jr., J. B. Glass and J. C. Gifford
1965 *Prehistoric Maya Settlement in the Belize Valley*, Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Vol. 54. Harvard University, Cambridge.
- Willey, G., and J. Gifford
1961 Pottery of the Holmul I style from Barton Ramie, British Honduras. In *Essays in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology*, edited by S. Lothrop, pp. 152-170. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.
- Willey, G., and P. Mathews
1985 Introduction. In *A Consideration of the Early Classic Period in the Maya Lowlands*, edited by G. Willey and P. Mathews, pp. 1-4. Institute of Mesoamerican Studies State University of New York at Albany, Publication No. 10. Albany, New York.
- Yaeger, J.
2000 Changing Patterns of Maya Community Structure and Organization at the End of the Classic Period: San Lorenzo, Cayo District, Belize. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania.

Actuncan



James O. McGovern
15 June 1993

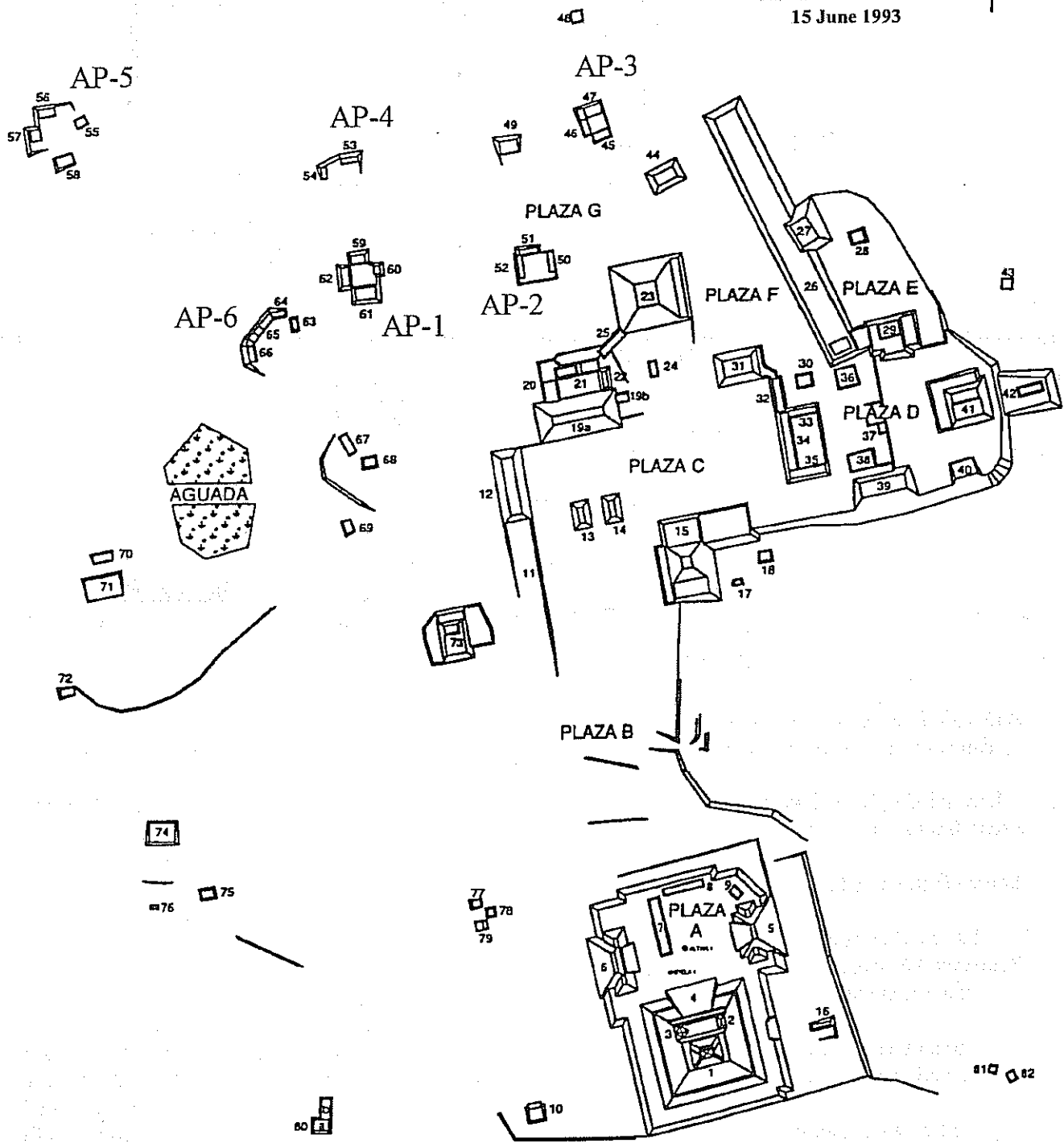


Figure 01: Actuncan Site Map. Drafted by J. O. McGovern and modified by L. J. LeCount.

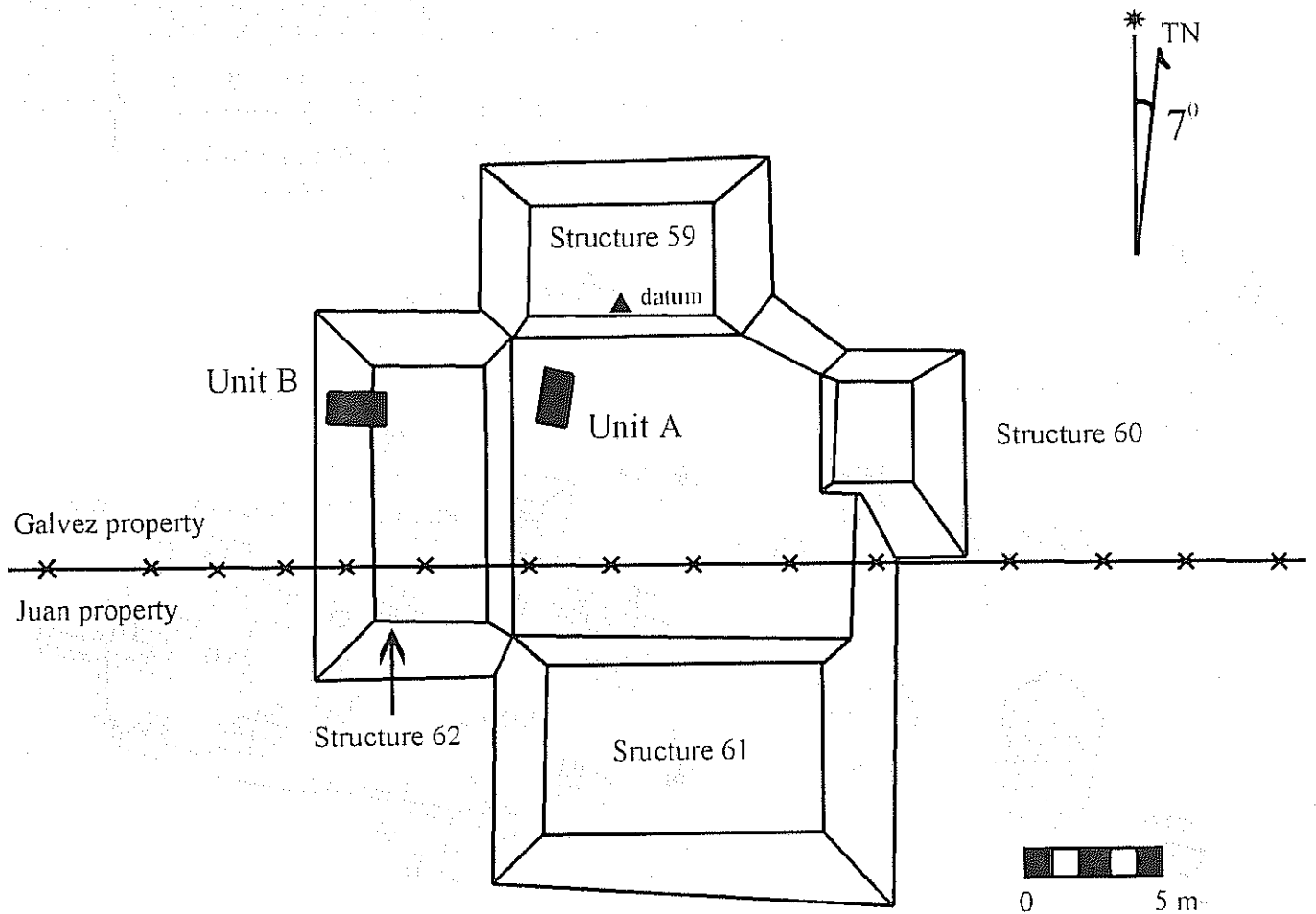


Figure 02: Actuncan *Plazuela* 1 (AP-1).

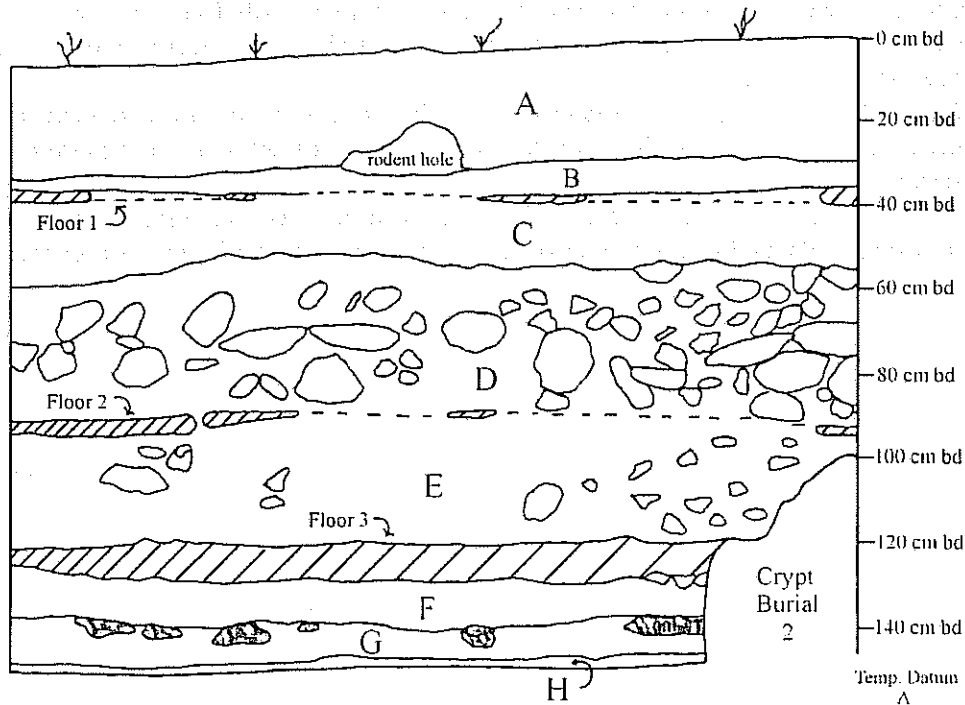


Figure 3
Operation 1/Suboperation A -- West Profile.

Strata A: Matrix: Blocky, very dark gray (10YR 3/1) clay with stones, limestone pebbles, and abundant artifacts. Lots: A/1. Cultural context: Collapse. Temporal phase: Late Classic II (Early facet Spanish Lookout).

Strata B: Matrix: Dark grayish-brown (10YR 4/2) clay loam with some stones and small pebbles, and abundant small sized artifacts. Lots: A/2 and A/3. Cultural context: Occupation debris. Temporal phase: Late Classic II (Early facet Spanish Lookout).

Strata C: Matrix: Plaster surface of packed *cal* and stone ballast. Lots: A/4. Cultural context: floor and ballast. Temporal phase: Possibly Late Classic I (Tiger Run).

Strata D: Matrix: Grainy pale brown (10YR 6/2) clay loam with large cobbles and stones. Lots: A/5 (associated A/6, A/7 burial). Cultural context: Platform fill. Temporal phase: Early Classic (Hermitage)?

Floor 2: Matrix: Plaster surface of packed *cal* with no obvious ballast. Lots: A/8. Cultural context: Floor. Temporal phase: Terminal Late Preclassic.

Strata E: Matrix: Grainy, pale brown (10YR 6/2) clay loam with abundant river cobbles and large artifacts. Lots: A/9, (associated with A/10). Cultural context: Platform fill. Temporal phase: Terminal Late Preclassic.

Floor 3: Matrix: Thick packed *cal* with very small pebbles and no evidence of ballast. Lots: A/11. Cultural context: Floor. Temporal phase: Late Preclassic (Barton Creek).

Strata F: Matrix: Compact, yellowish-brown (10YR 5/4) clay loam with decomposing limestone inclusions and very few pebbles or cobbles. Lots: A/12. Cultural context: occupation surface? Temporal phase: Late Preclassic (Barton Creek).

Strata G: Matrix: Gritty, compact yellowish-brown (10YR 5/6) clay with limestone inclusions. Very low artifact densities. Lots: A/13. Cultural context: natural soil with artifacts. Temporal phase: Late Preclassic (Barton Creek).

Strata H: Matrix: Dense, blocky (10YR 5/8) yellow clay with limestone inclusions, chunks of gray clay, and *sascab*. Lacking artifacts. Lots: not excavated. Cultural context: sterile soil. Temporal phase: none.

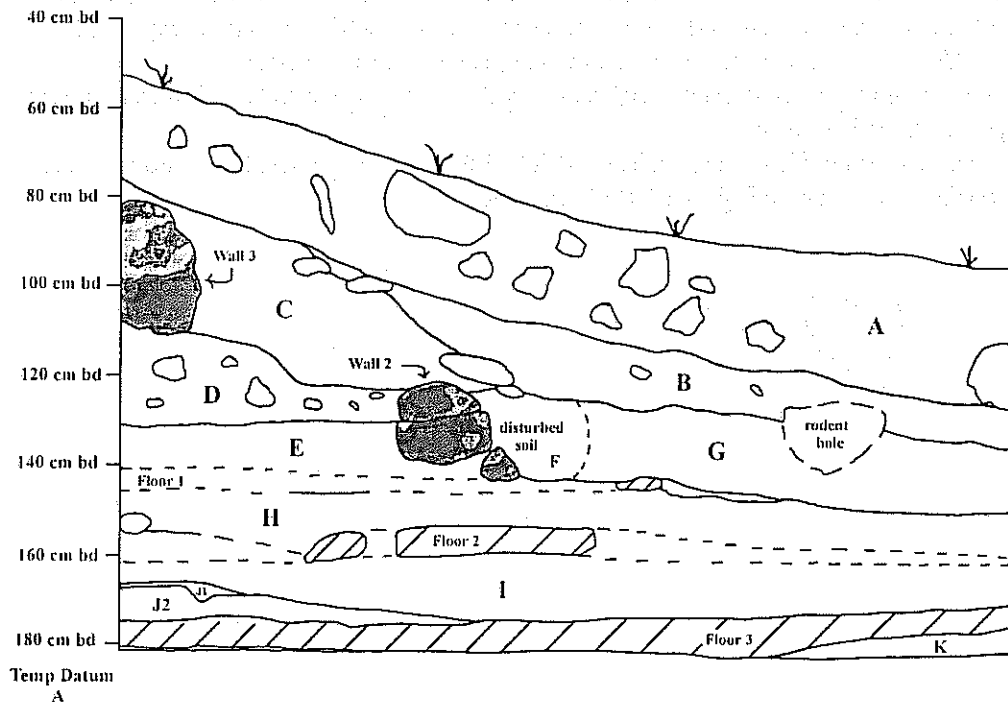


Figure 4
Operation 1/Suboperation B -- South Profile

Strata A: Matrix: Blocky, very dark gray (10YR 3/1) clay with stones, limestone pebbles, and abundant artifacts. Lots: B/1. Cultural context: Collapse. Temporal phase: Late Classic II and some Terminal Classic (Spanish Lookout).

Strata B: Matrix: Compact, very dark grayish-brown (10YR 3/2) clay loam with some stones and limestone chunks and many pebbles. Lots: B/2 and B/5. Cultural context: Terminal occupation? Temporal phase: Late Classic II (early facet Spanish Lookout).

Strata C: Matrix: Compact, brown (10YR 4/3) loamy clay with limestone inclusions and pebbles. Lots: B/4, B/7, and B/8. Cultural context: occupation/fill. Temporal phase: Late Classic II (Spanish Lookout).

Strata D: Matrix: Compact, yellowish-brown (10YR 5/4) loamy clay with stones and limestone pebbles. Lots: B/8 and B/10. Cultural context: platform fill. Temporal phase: Terminal Late Preclassic.

Strata E: Matrix: Grainy, fine, light brown (10YR 4/3 to 6/2) loam with few stones and pebbles. Lots: B/8 and B/10. Cultural context: Occupation/fill. Temporal phase: Terminal Late Preclassic.

Strata F: Matrix: Compact, dark yellowish-brown (10YR 4/4) clay loam with abundant stones and pebbles. Lots: B/6. Cultural context: step fill? Temporal phase: Late Classic.

Strata G: Matrix: Compact, yellowish-brown (10YR 5/4) clay loam with many stones and pebbles. Lots: B/3. Cultural context: Occupation refuse. Temporal phase: Late Classic.

Floor 1: Matrix: Packed, yellowish-brown (10YR 5/4) *cal* with only a few stones and pebbles as ballast. Lots: B/12. Cultural context: Floor. Temporal phase: Terminal Late Preclassic.

Strata H: Matrix: Compact, yellowish-brown (10YR 5/4 to 6/6) loamy clay with limestone inclusions. Lots: B/13. Cultural context: occupation surface. Temporal phase: Late Preclassic.

Floor 2: Matrix: Thick packed *cal*. Lots: B/14. Cultural context: Floor. Temporal phase: Late Preclassic.

Strata I: Matrix: Pebbles and stones with some *cal*. Lots B/14. Temporal phase: Late Preclassic.

Strata J: Matrix: Burnt clay and *sascab*. J1 is burnt red clay (10R 4/8) and J2 is burnt gray *sascab* (10YR5/1). Lots: B/15. Cultural context: Floor. Temporal phase: Late Preclassic.

Floor 3: Matrix: *Sascab* blocks interspersed with natural yellow clay. Lots: B/15. Cultural context: Floor. Temporal phase: Late Preclassic.

Strata K: Matrix: Dense, compact brownish-yellow (10YR 6/6) clay with natural inclusions. Lots: B/16. Cultural context: sterile soil. Temporal phase: Late Preclassic.

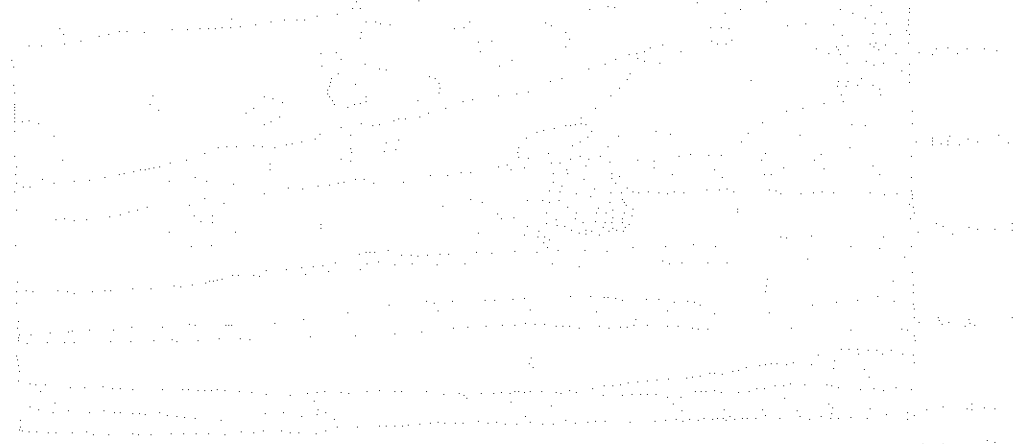


Figure 3
Site plan of the Late Preclassic site

The site plan shows a grid of structures and features. The structures are represented by rectangles of varying sizes. Some structures have internal divisions, suggesting rooms or courtyards. The plan is oriented with North at the top. The grid is roughly rectangular, with a central area containing several larger structures. The surrounding areas are less densely packed with structures, indicating open spaces or other features not clearly defined in the plan. The overall layout suggests a planned settlement or a specific type of architectural arrangement.

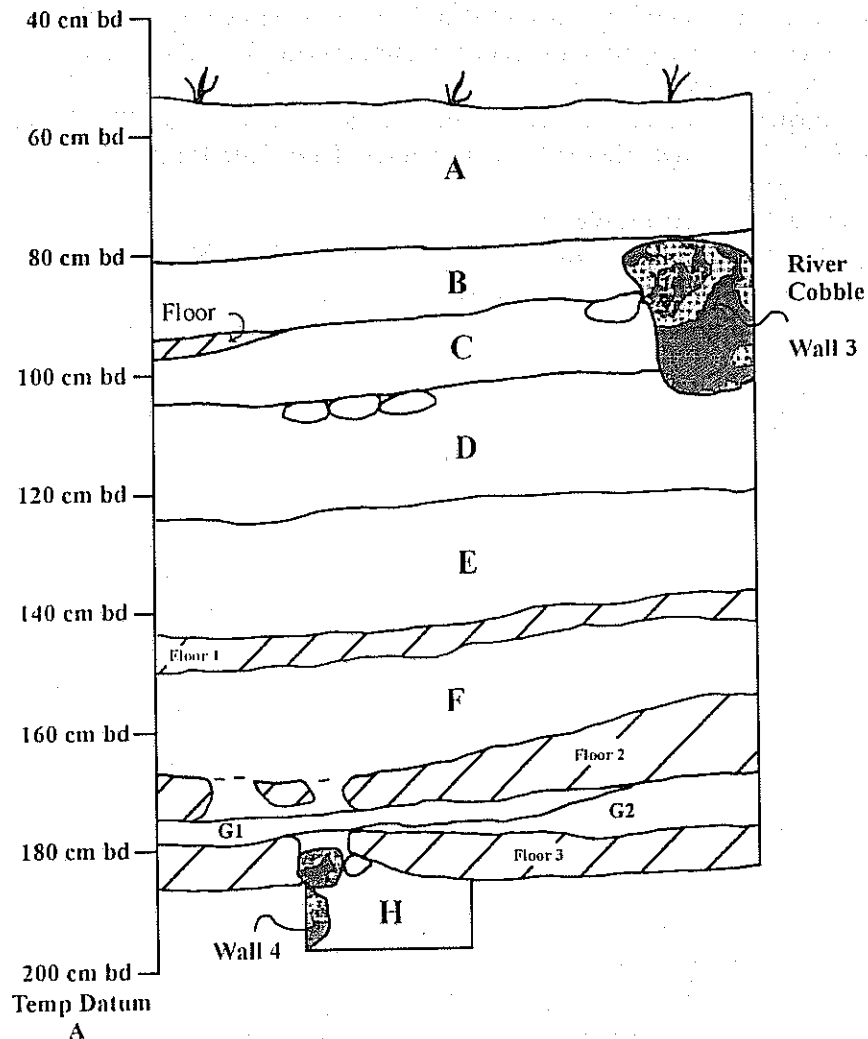


Figure 5
Operation 1/Suboperation B -- East Profile

Strata A: Matrix: Blocky, very dark gray (10YR 3/1) clay with stones, limestone pebbles, and abundant artifacts. Lots: B/1. Cultural context: Collapse. Temporal phase: Late Classic II and some Terminal Classic (Spanish Lookout).

Strata B: Matrix: Compact, brown (10YR 4/3) loamy clay with some stones and pebbles. Lots: B/9. Cultural context: occupation material. Temporal phase: Late Classic II (early facet Spanish Lookout).

Strata C: Matrix: Grainy, brown (10YR 5/3) clay loam with some stones and pebbles. A patch of floor in northeast corner. Lots: B/10. Cultural context: Floor and ballast? Temporal phase: Terminal Late Preclassic.

Strata D: Matrix: Grainy, brown (10YR 5/3) clay loam with lots of angular rock, stones, and pebbles. Lots: B/10. Cultural context: Platform fill. Temporal phase: Terminal Late Preclassic.

Strata E: Matrix: Compact, pale brown (10YR 6/3) clay loam with angular rock, stones, and dense pebbles. Lots: B/10. Cultural context: Platform fill. Temporal phase: Terminal Late Preclassic.

Floor 1: Same as Floor 1 in south profile.

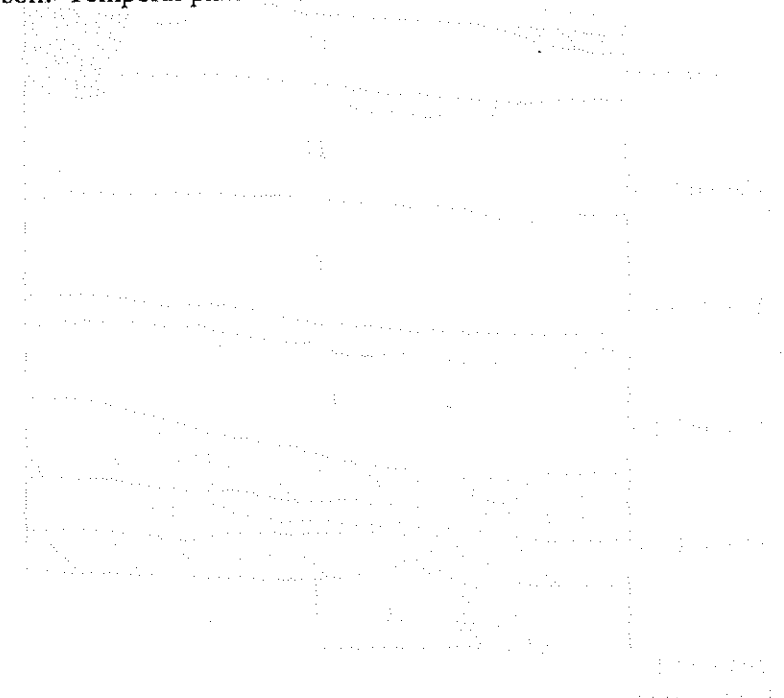
Strata F: Matrix: Compact, yellowish-brown (10YR 5/4 to 6/6) loamy clay with limestone inclusions. Lots: B/13. Cultural context: occupation surface. Temporal phase: Late Preclassic.

Floor 2: Same as Floor 2 in south profile.

Strata G: Matrix: Burnt clay and *sascab*. G1 is burnt red clay (10R 4/8) and G2 is burnt gray *sascab* (10YR5/1). Lots: B/15. Cultural context: Floor. Temporal phase: Late Preclassic. Same as J1/J2 in south profile.

Floor 3: Same as Floor 3 in south profile.

Strata H: Matrix: Dense, compact brownish-yellow (10YR 6/6) clay with natural inclusions. Lots: B/16. Cultural context: sterile soil. Temporal phase: Late Preclassic.



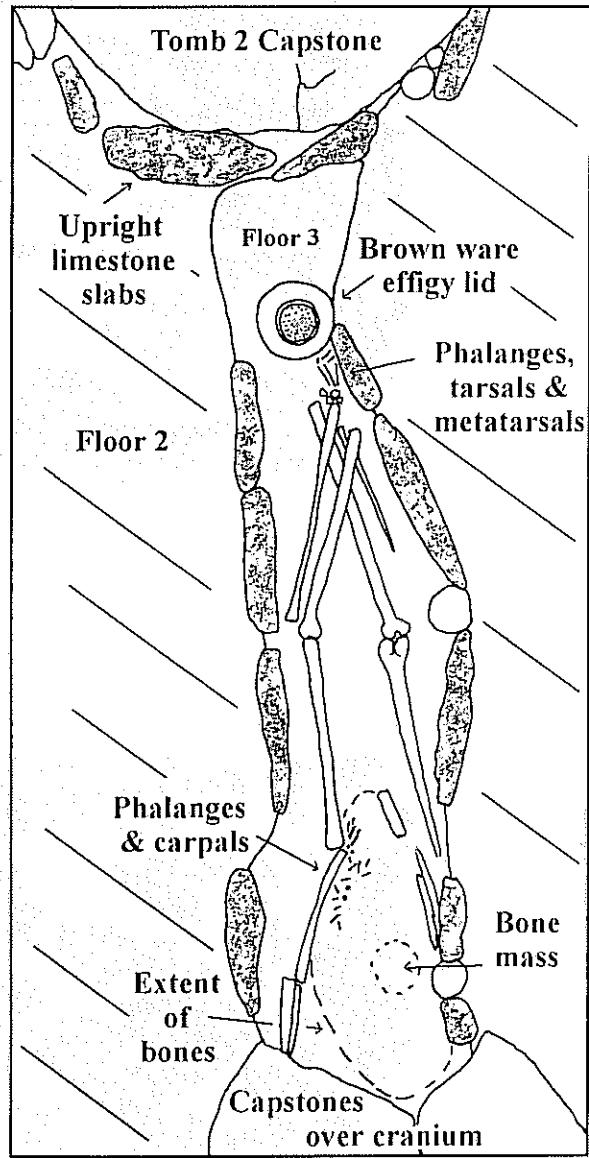
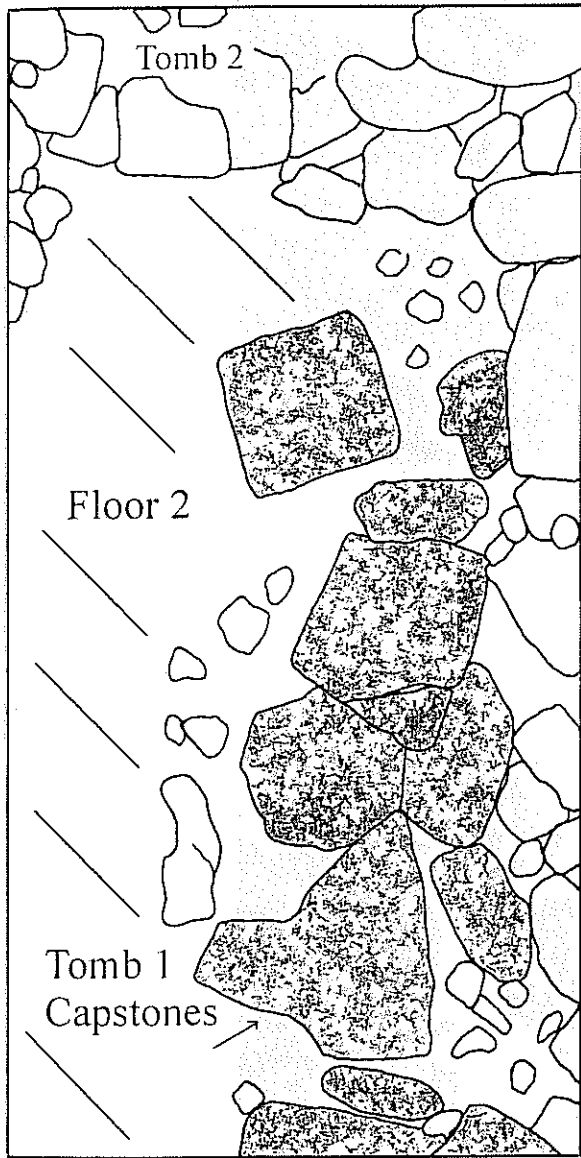


Figure 06: Limestone Capstones on top of Burial 1 Crypt (a); Burial 1 (b).

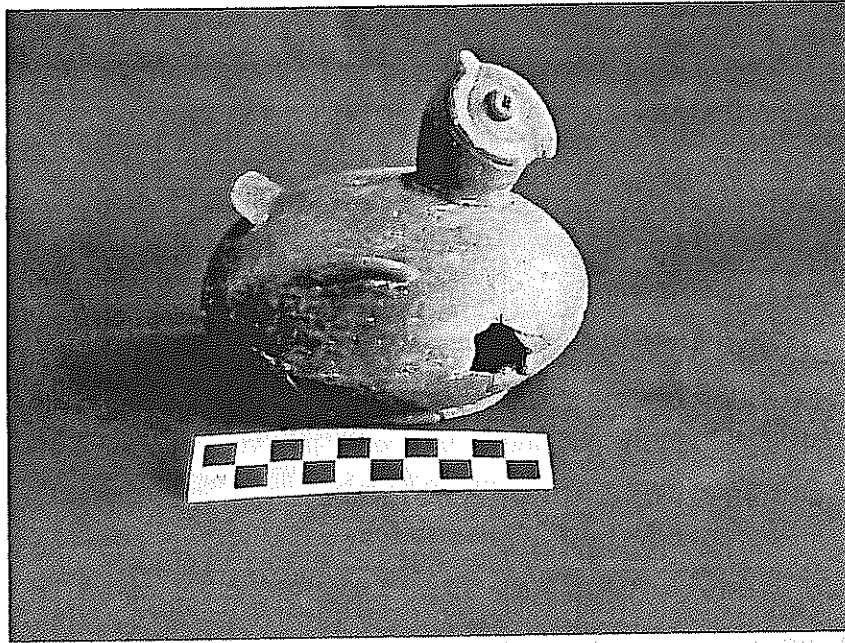


Figure 07: Brown ware bird effigy lid: top and bottom views.

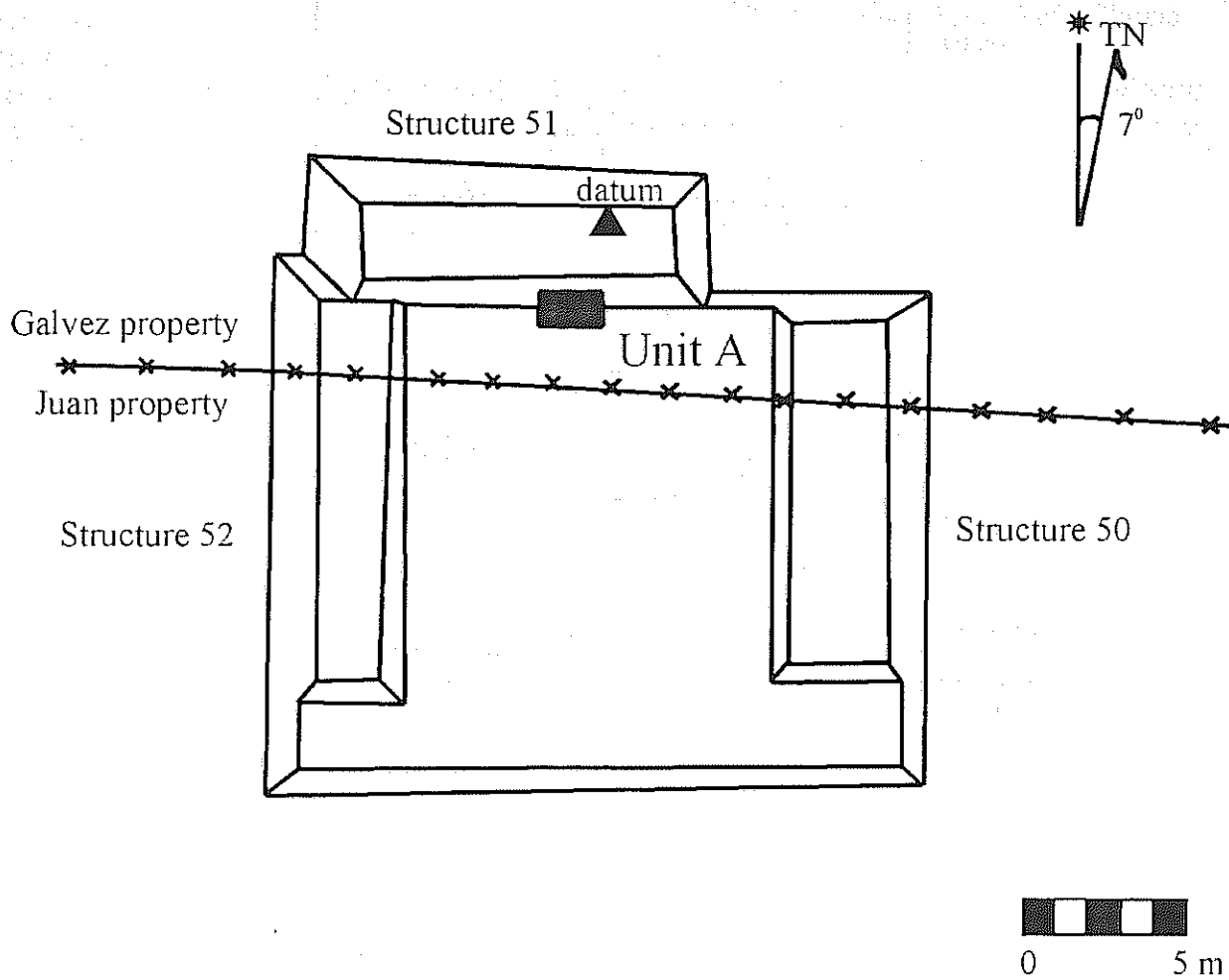


Figure 08: Actuncan *Plazuela 2* (AP-2).

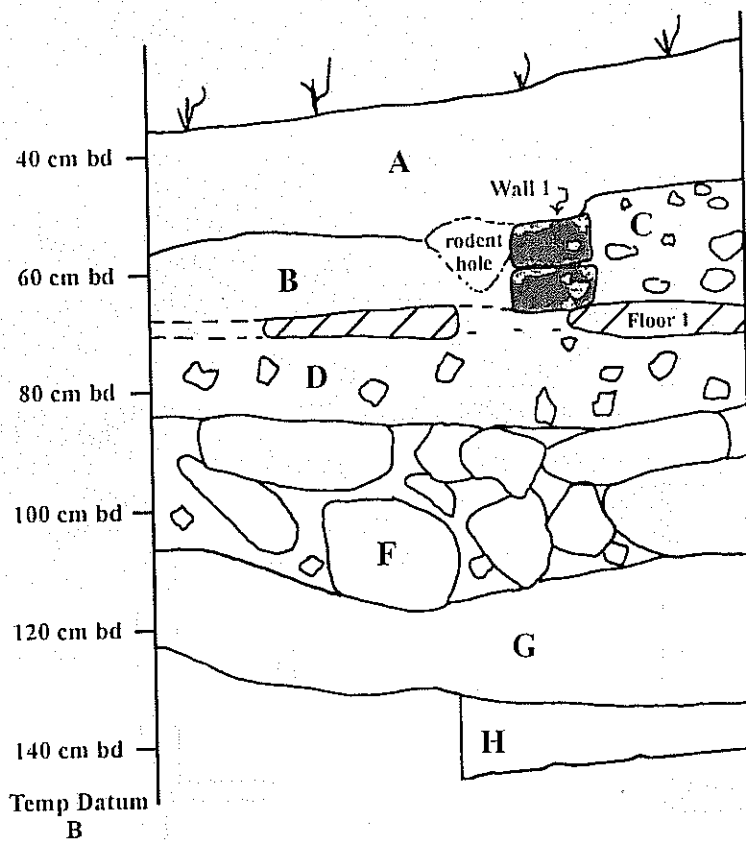


Figure 9
Operation 2/Suboperation A -- West Profile

Strata A: Matrix: Compact, black (10YR 2/1) loamy clay with cut limestone blocks, pulverized limestone chunks, and pebbles. Lots: A/1. Cultural context: collapse. Temporal phase: Late Classic II (early facet Spanish Lookout).

Strata B: Matrix: Compact, dark grayish-brown (10YR 4/2) clay loam with limestone chunks. Lots: A/2 and A/3. Cultural context: occupation material. Temporal phase: Late Classic II (early facet Spanish Lookout).

Strata C: Matrix: Blocky, brown (10YR 4/3) loamy clay with abundant stones and pebbles. Lots A/5. Cultural context: Platform fill. Temporal phase: Late Classic I (Tiger Run)?

Strata D: Matrix: Packed *cal* over grainy, light brownish-gray (10YR 6/2) clay loam with abundant angular rock. Lots: A/4 and A/6. Cultural context: floor and ballast. Temporal phase: Late Classic I (Tiger Run)?

Strata F: Matrix: Grainy, dark yellowish-brown (10YR 4/4) clay loam with boulders and stones. Lots: A/7 and A/8. Cultural context: Platform fill. Temporal phase: Late Classic I (Tiger Run)?

Strata G: Matrix: Compact, dark yellowish-brown (10YR 4/6) clay with natural limestone inclusions. Lots: A/9. Cultural context: occupation surface? Temporal phase: Early Classic (Hermitage)?

Strata H: Matrix: Compact, brown (10YR 4/3) clay with natural limestone inclusion and very few artifacts. Lots: A/10. Cultural context: Natural soil with artifacts. Temporal phase: Early Classic (Hermitage)/ Late Preclassic?

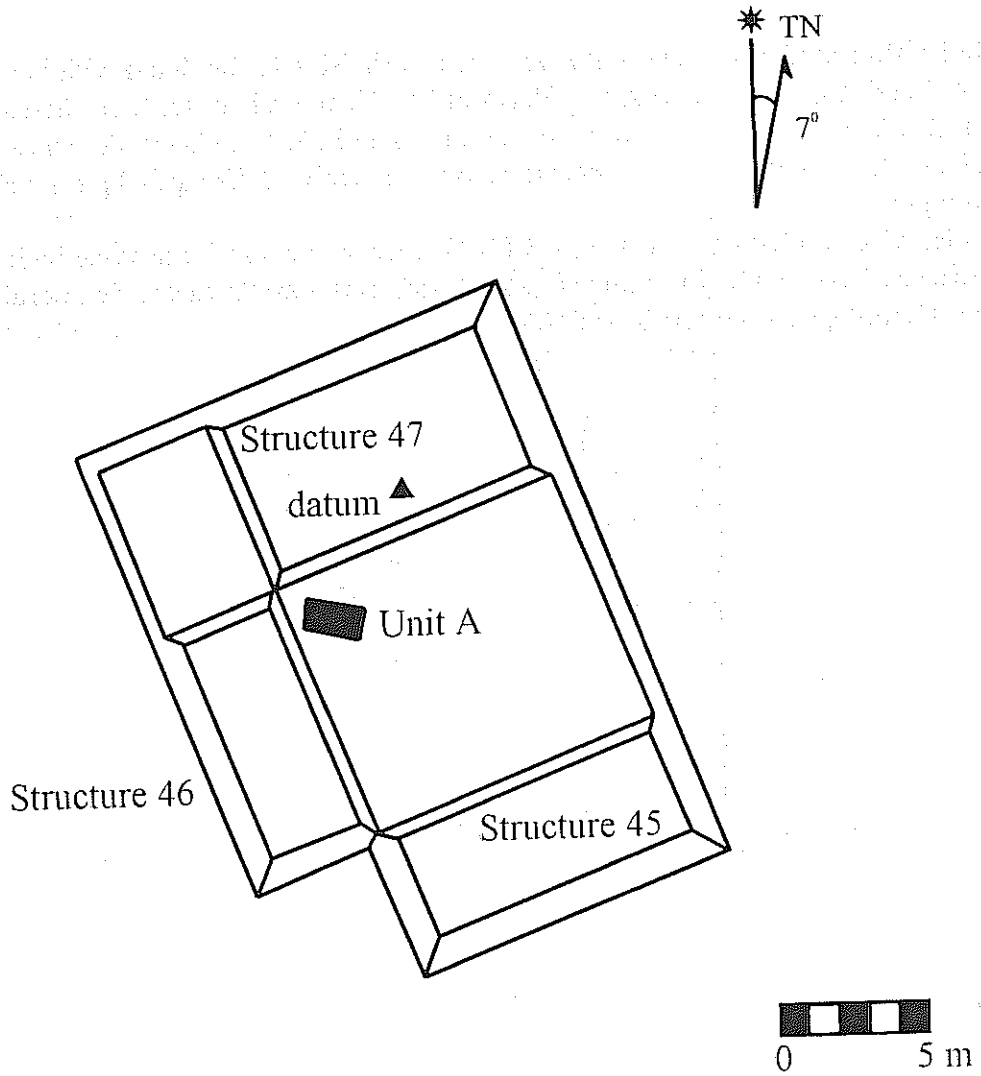


Figure 10: Actuncan *Plauzela* 3 (AP-3).

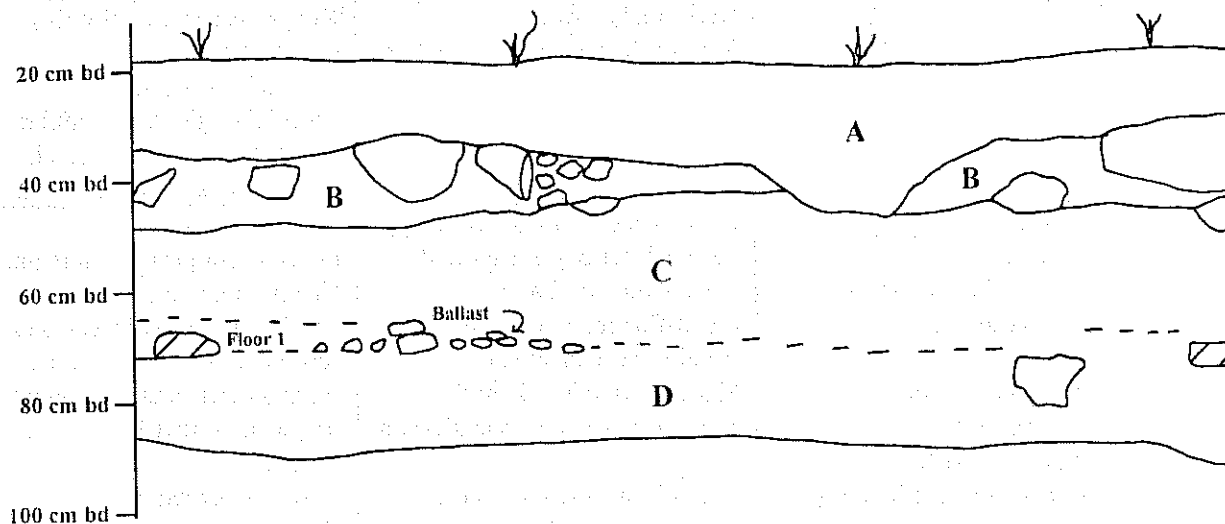


Figure 11
Operation 3/Suboperation A -- North Profile

Strata A: Compact, chunky, very dark brown (10YR 2/2) clay with lots of artifacts. Lots: A/1. Cultural context: Humus root zone and highly disturbed occupation material (with some evidence of floor). Temporal phase: Late Classic II

Strata B: Chunky, very dark grayish-brown (10YR 3/2) clay. Lots: A/2. Cultural context: Fill. Temporal phase: Late Classic II (early facet Spanish Lookout).

Strata C: Compact, brown (10YR 5/3) clay with lots of limestone chunks. Lots: A/3 and A/4. Cultural context: occupation and fill. Temporal phase: Late Classic II (early facet Spanish Lookout).

Floor 1: Matrix: mixed *cal* and small stones. Some evidence of floor and ballast in northwest corner of unit. Lots: A/5. Cultural context: floor and ballast. Temporal context: Early Classic/Late Preclassic?

Strata D: Compact, yellowish-brown (10YR 5/4) clay with limestone flecks. Lots: A/5. Cultural context: occupation surface. Temporal context: Early Classic/Late Preclassic?

Table 1: Uaxactun Early Classic Pottery Attributes.

Phase	Ware	Form	Decoration
Tzakol 1	None listed.	Sharp Z-angle bowls. High-necked jars. Thin-wall, round-sided dishes.	Geometric. Rectilinear or curvilinear outlined in dots. Faceted sharp Z-angles. Motifs: single step, angular scroll, hook, simple scroll, ovoid, zigzag and sky-band.
Tzakol 2	Red, black, & gray on orange. Red & black on cream. Red on orange. Red on cream. Black on cream. Red on bluff. White on black. Red, white, & black on cream.	Round-sided bowls with ring, pedestal, tetrapod, tripod, & impressed-disc bases. Basal-flange, tripod bowl. Bowl with restricted orifice. Flaring-sided bowls with pedestal base and cone-shaped cover. Cylinder tripod and apron cover. Sharp-Z-angle cylinder tripods and covers. Thin-sided pitcher with gutter spout and ring-stand base. Barrel-shaped tripod vase and cover. Round-sided pot stand. Miniature jar. Grooved, incurved-rim bowl. Squat jar.	Postslip incising. Postslip gouging & incising. Groove-incising. Application of spikes, discs, screwheads and bat heads. Impressions made by thumb, finger, nail, textile or reed. Modeling and painting of effigy cover handles. Cutting of vessel wall and open work. Punching with awl. Application of white paint. Motifs: naturalistic bird, human, jaguar, and pigs; conventionalized bird, serpents; rectilinear and curvilinear.
Tzakol 3	Thin orange. Red and black on gray. Red on gray.	Flaring-sided, everted-rim tripod dish and bowl. Round-sided, everted rim ring base bowl. Outcurving sided dishes or bowls. Flaring-sided, everted-rim dish. Outcurving, thin-sided vases or pitchers with gutter spout. Cylindrical vases. Basal and lateral flange ring-base bowl. Round-sided, tripod dishes. Two part effigies. Cream picher. Five-bowl, cluster candelero.	Motifs: Naturalistic centipede; conventional undulating serpent and toad; glyphic symbols, rectilinear and curvilinear motifs.

Table 2: Barton Ramie Early Classic Pottery Types, Attributes, and Relative Frequencies.

Name	Defining attributes	% (count)
<i>Ware Unspecified</i>		
<i>Poorly known wares</i>		
Fowler Ceramic Group	Bright orange slipped, thin-walled vessels	4.98% (1,456)
Fowler Orange Red Type	Well-smoothed orange slip	96.30%
San Ignacio Red-on-brown Type	Orange-red & brown horizontal stripes	03.7%
Hewlett Bank Ceramic Group	Tan or brown unslipped vessels	00.80% (235)
Hewlett Bank Unslipped Type	Well-smoothed surfaces	100.00%
<i>Petén Gloss Ware</i>		
<i>High luster slipped calcite ware</i>		
Minanha Ceramic Group	Red, medium thick slipped vessels	26.36% (7706)
Minanha Red Type	Well smoothed and glossy surface finish	99.7%
St. Herman Impressed Type	Short vertical impressions on basal ridge or flange	0.3%
Dos Hermanos Ceramic Group	Red-orange, streaky slipped, thin-walled vessels	00.90% (262)
Dos Hermanos Red Type	Hard, well-smoothed and glossy surface finish	90.00%
Mahogany Creek Incised Type	Incised decoration (horizontal & diagonal hatching)	10.00%
Balanza Ceramic Group	Black, thin slipped vessels	9.55% (2,792)
Balanza Black Type	Hard and glossy surface but consistently weathered	85.6%
Lucha Incised Type	Incised or groove-and-incised lines and scallops	04.6%
Paradero Fluted Type	Vertical or diagonal fluting	00.5%
Eastern Branch Plain Type	Matte finish (unslipped gray, dark gray or black exteriors)	09.3%
Pucte Ceramic Group	Brown, glossy finished, thin-walled vessels	0.75% (219)
Pucte Brown Type	Glossy finish with narrow horizontal polishing grooves	81.3%
Santa Teresa Incised Type	Incised bands interrupted by sunburst designs, & appliques	16.0%
Chorro Fluted Type	Vertical fluting	02.7%
Actuncan Ceramic Group	Orange slipped vessels	0.69% (202)
Actuncan Orange-polychrome Type	Red-and-black linear, stepped designs	74.7%
Batellos Black-on-red Type	Black lines, dotted lines, or stepped decoration on red slip	25.3%
Dos Arroyos Ceramic Group	Orange slipped, thin cream undercoated vessels	4.53% (1,324)
Dos Arroyos Orange-polychrome Type	Red & black horizontal lines, & various naturalistic motifs	93.6%
Caldero Buff-polychrome Type	Red & black decorations on buff to light tans exteriors w/ orange-slipped interiors	3.7%
Yaloche Cream-polychrome Type	Thick cream slip on exterior, may have orange slipped interior	2.7%
Agüila Ceramic Group	Bright orange, soft slip on thick-walled vessels	See Dos Arroyos
Agüila Orange Type	Well smoothed slip may have cream undercoat like Dos Arroyo	(28 sherds)
Pita Incised Type	Incising on top of basal flange	(1 sherd)

<i>Uxactum Unslipped Ware</i>	<i>Brown to buff unslipped calcite ware</i>	68.67% (20,077)
Mopan Ceramic Group	Uniformly striated, thick walled vessels	11.50% (3,362)
Mopan Striated Type	Interior well smoothed and exterior surfaces less so	100%
Socotz Ceramic Group	Haphazard exterior striations on moderately thick vessels	39.04% (11,416)
Socotz Striated Type	Raked striations that crisscross vessel exterior	100%
White Cliff Striated Group	Dragged surface treatment on vessels	18.12% (5,299)
White Cliff Striated Type	Rough, dull brown surface	100%

Table 3: Summary of Research Activity on Actuncan Civic Architecture.

Structure	Kind	Description
Structure 12	Range structure	Late Classic structure built on Early Classic floors.
Structure 13	Ball court	Western structure built in Late Preclassic and used continuously modified into the Late Classic II, including modification in Early Classic.
Structure 15	Pyramid	Probably built initially in the middle Preclassic and continuously modified through Late Classic; Early Classic material in subfloor fill.
Structure 18	Small platform	Approximately one meter thick Early Classic midden under Late Classic platform.
Structure 19A	Range structure	Early Classic platform built on an earlier Terminal Late Preclassic (?) structure which rested on Late Preclassic plaza floor.
Structure 26	Range structure	Early Classic construction material found in fill levels below last floor and on top of Floor 3. No data on levels below Floor 3. Last Plaza E floor may have been built in Early Classic.
Structure 28	Small platform	Early Classic refuse on side of small platform in Plaza E. Structure 28 probably built in Late Classic.
Structure 29	Small platform	Late Classic platform probably built on top of EC refuse.
Ball Court Alley	Ball court	Probably built in Late Preclassic and modified continuously until Late Classic.

Table 4: Summary of Excavation Lots and Ceramic Samples.

Provenience	Volume m ³	Sample Size	Cultural context	Phase designation	Comments
1/A/1	0.598172	Very large (5 bags)	Collapse	Late Classic II	Totally eroded, large to moderate sized sherds.
1/A/2	0.215796	Moderate (2 bags)	Mixed	Late Classic II	Totally eroded, large to moderate sized sherds.
1/A/3	0.034073	Small (< 1 bag)	Material on top of floor	Late Classic II	Totally eroded, large to moderate sized sherds.
1/A/4	0.155222	Small (1/2 bag)	Floor 1	Late Classic (poss. Late Classic I)	Moderately sized sherds.
1/A/5	1.253133	Very large (7 bags)	Platform fill	Early Classic	No lateral ridges open forms; presence of basal flanges & Orange Peten Gloss sherds; presence of Sierra Red and other waxy sherds.
1/A/6	0.178512	Small (1/2 bag)	Mixed, but predominately fill	Possibly Early Classic	Fowler Orange/red sherds; Black on Orange sherd.
1/A/7	0.071932	Small (< 1/2 bag)	Crypt burial	Early Classic	Bird effigy lid; "Holmul Orange ware".
1/A/8	0.121149	Small (1/2 bag)	Floor 2	Terminal Late Preclassic	San Antonio Golden Brown, "Holmul Orange ware", Sierra Red, ring base, and solid truncated cone support.
1/A/9	0.31423	Moderate (2 bags)	Platform fill	Terminal Late Preclassic	Sierra Red basal flanges, Fowler Red, Cunil ash ware, Cream slip lip flanges.
1/A/10	0.053003	Small (< a bag)	Platform fill	Terminal Late Preclassic	Orange Peten Gloss; Savannah Bank Usulután, Sierra Red simple bowl.
1/A/11	0.246084	Moderate (2 bags)	Floor 3	Late Preclassic	Sierra Red simple bowls, Sierra Red everted plates.
1/A/12	0.16658	Moderate (2 bags)	Occupation surface	Late Preclassic	Sierra Red everted plate, Polvera, Joventud?, Chumhinta Black?
1/A/13	0.265013	Very small 18 sherds	Occupation surface	Late Preclassic	Eroded sherds, no Mars Orange or Jocote wares.

Provenience	Volume m ³	Sample Size	Cultural context	Phase designation	Comments
1/B/1	0.37859	Moderate (2 bags)	Collapse	Terminal Classic	Eroded, moderate to small sized sherds.
1/B/2	0.151436	Small (1 bag)	Refuse	Late Classic II	Eroded, large to moderate sized sherds.
1/B/3	0.189295	Small (1 bag)	Occupation surface	Late Classic	Eroded calcite sherds, but some ash ware.
1/B/4	0.0846	Small (1 bag)	Platform fill	Late Classic II	Wide range of Classic period diagnostics.
1/B/5	0.113577	Small (< 1 bag)	Platform fill behind step/wall 1	Late Classic II	Inclusion of a possible Terminal Classic jar.
1/B/6	0.049217	Small (< 1 bag)	Occupation surface	Late Classic	Moderate to small, eroded sherds.
1/B/7	0.060574	Small (1/2 bag)	Platform fill behind Wall 2	Late Classic II	No comment
1/B/8	0.227154	Moderate (2 bags)	Occupation used as fill	Late Classic II	Moderate to small sherds.
1/B/9	0.132507	Small (1 bag)	Platform fill behind Wall 3	Late Classic II	Moderate to small sherds.
1/B/10	0.283943	Moderate (2 bags)	Platform fill	Terminal Late Preclassic	Lip, medial, and some small basal flanges, Sierra Red.
1/B/11					Not assigned
1/B/12	0.265013	Moderate (2 bags)	Floor 1	Terminal Late Preclassic	"Holmul Orange ware", Sierra Red everted plate, Polvera, unsp. polychrome.
1/B/13	0.170366	Small (< 1 bag)	Platform fill and occupation	Late Preclassic	No flanges, Sierra Red everted plate, Society Hall.
1/B/14	0.340731	Small (< 1/3 bag)	Floor 2	Late Preclassic	Same as above
1/B/15	0.234726	Very small (< 20 sherds)	Floor 3	Late Preclassic	No Jocote, no Mars Orange ware, only eroded calcite.
1/B/16	0.094648	Very small (7 sherds)	River cobble foundation	Late Preclassic	Same as above.

Provenience	Volume m ³	Sample Size	Cultural context	Phase designation	Comments
2/A/1	0.283943	Small (< 1 bag)	Collapse	Late Classic II	No comments.
2/A/2	0.416449	Moderate (2 bags)	Occupation surface	Late Classic II	No comments.
2/A/3	0.037859	Small (< 1 bag)	Occupation surface	Late Classic II	No comments.
2/A/4	0.106005	Moderate (2 bags)	Floor 1	Late Classic I	No comments.
2/A/5	0.280157	Moderate (2 bags)	Platform fill	Late Classic I	No comments.
2/A/6	0.14765	Small (< 1 bag)	Floor 1	Late Classic I	No comments.
2/A/7	1.72	Small (< 1 bag)	Platform fill	Late Classic I	No comments.
2/A/8	0.37859	Small (< 1 bag)	Platform fill	Late Classic I	No comments.
2/A/9	0.458094	Small (< 1 bag)	Occupation surface	Early Classic	No comments.
2/A/10	0.1	Small (< 1 bag)	Sterile soil w/artifacts	Early Classic	No comments.
3/A/1	0.480809	Small (1 bag)	Disturbed surface	Late Classic II	No comments.
3/A/2	0.446736	Moderate (2 bags)	Fill	Late Classic II	No comments.
3/A/3	0.416449	Small (1 bag)	Occupation/fill	Late Classic II	No comments.
3/A/4	0.359661	Small (1 bag)	Occupation material	Early Classic?	No comments.
3/A/5	0.832898	Small (1 bag)	Floor 1 and fill below it	Early Classic/Late Preclassic	No comments.

Table 5: Summary of Non-ceramic Artifacts by Excavation Lot.

Lot	Volume m ³	Cultural context	Phase designation	Shell	Obsidian	Animal Bone	Ground stone	Slate	Special objects
1/A/1	0.598172	Collapse	Late Classic II	41	1		1	2	Pigment
1/A/2	0.215796	Mixed	Late Classic II	7		1			
1/A/3	0.034073	Material on top of floor	Late Classic II	2					
1/A/4	0.155222	Floor 1	Late Classic (poss. Late Classic I)	1			3		
1/A/5	1.253133	Platform fill	Early Classic	7	5	5	7	1	
1/A/6	0.178512	Mixed, but mostly fill	Possibly Early Classic	3		9	1		
1/A/7	0.071932	Crypt burial	Early Classic						
1/A/8	0.121149	Floor 2	Terminal Late Preclassic			1			
1/A/9	0.31423	Platform fill	Terminal Late Preclassic	7	1	20	1		
1/A/10	0.053003	Platform fill	Terminal Late Preclassic	2				1	
1/A/11	0.246084	Floor 3	Late Preclassic	37				8	
1/A/12	0.16658	Occupation surface	Late Preclassic	48		5		1	
1/A/13	0.265013	Occupation surface	Late Preclassic	1	1				
1/B/1	0.37859	Collapse	Terminal Classic	6				4	
1/B/2	0.151436	Refuse	Late Classic II	3	3	2			
1/B/3	0.189295	Occupation surface	Late Classic	28	2	3		2	2 Beads
1/B/4	0.0846	Platform fill	Late Classic II		1				
1/B/5	0.113577	Platform fill behind step/wall 1	Late Classic II	1	1	2	1		
1/B/6	0.049217	Occupation surface	Late Classic	1		4			
1/B/7	0.060574	Platform fill behind Wall 2	Late Classic II						

1/B/8	0.227154	Occupation used as fill	Late Classic II	4	1			2	1	
1/B/9	0.132507	Platform fill behind Wall 3	Late Classic II	1				1	1	
1/B/10	0.283943	Platform fill	Terminal Late Preclassic	6				1		
1/B/12	0.265013	Floor 1	Terminal Late Preclassic	4	2			2		
1/B/13	0.170366	Platform fill / occupation surface	Late Preclassic						2	
1/B/14	0.340731	Floor 2	Late Preclassic	7	1	2			1	
1/B/15	0.234726	Floor 3	Late Preclassic	1	1					
1/B/16	0.094648	River cobble foundation	Late Preclassic							
2/A/1	0.283943	Collapse	Late Classic II	1						
2/A/2	0.416449	Occupation surface	Late Classic II	6		4				
2/A/3	0.037859	Occupation surface	Late Classic II							
2/A/4	0.106005	Floor 1	Late Classic I	2	4					
2/A/5	0.280157	Platform fill	Late Classic I	6						
2/A/6	0.14765	Floor 1	Late Classic I							Painted Plaster
2/A/7	1.72	Platform fill	Late Classic I						1	
2/A/8	0.37859	Platform fill	Late Classic I						1	
2/A/9	0.458094	Occupation surface	Early Classic	42	1				2	
2/A/10	0.1	Sterile soil w/artifacts	Early Classic	3						
3/A/1	0.480809	Disturbed surface	Late Classic II	2	1					
3/A/2	0.446736	Fill	Late Classic II	10	1			1	1	
3/A/3	0.416449	Occupation/fill	Late Classic II	16	1			2	25	
3/A/4	0.359661	Occupation material	Early Classic?					1		
3/A/5	0.832898	Floor 1 and fill below it	Early Classic/Late Preclassic	1	1	2			1	

Table 6: Summary of Non-ceramic Artifacts by Period and Excavation Volume.

Time	Obsidian		Shell		Groundstone		Slate		Bone	
	no.	per cm ³	no.	per cm ³	no.	per cm ³	no.	per cm ³	no.	per cm ³
Late Classic II	12	0.0278	129	0.2989	09	0.0208	36	0.0834	16	0.0371
Late Classic I	00	0.0000	09	0.0323	03	0.0108	02	0.1289	00	0.0000
Early Classic	11	0.0338	56	0.1721	09	0.0276	04	0.0123	16	0.0492
T. Late Preclassic	03	0.0289	19	0.1832	04	0.0386	01	0.0096	21	0.2025
Late Preclassic	03	0.0198	94	0.6192	00	0.0000	12	0.0790	07	0.0461
Total	29		307		25		55		60	