CHOCOLÁ ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT

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Editors

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[Headline picture: surface collection, el Cementerio, PACH 2004]

CHAPTER 1

Introduction, Backgrounds and Objectives of the Chocolá Project

Jonathan Kaplan and Juan Antonio Valdés

Introduction

After the 2003 season, the Chocolá Archaeological Project (*Proyecto Arqueológico Chocolá,* PACH) [Fig. 1-1] conducted its second four-month long field season from May 1 to August 30, 2004, under the direction of Dr. Jonathan Kaplan from the University of New Mexico, U.S.A., and Dr. Juan Antonio Valdés, from the University of San Carlos, Guatemala. Thus, the stipulations of Agreement Number 9 signed between the Director of PACH, Dr. Jonathan Kaplan, and Lic. Guillermo Díaz Romero, Director General of the Direction General of Cultural and Natural Patrimony *(Dirección General de Patrimonio Cultural y Natural)* were fulfilled. This second season constituted the second of five years of research completed at the archaeological site, under the terms of Agreement No.19 signed the 4th of May, 2003, between the parties.

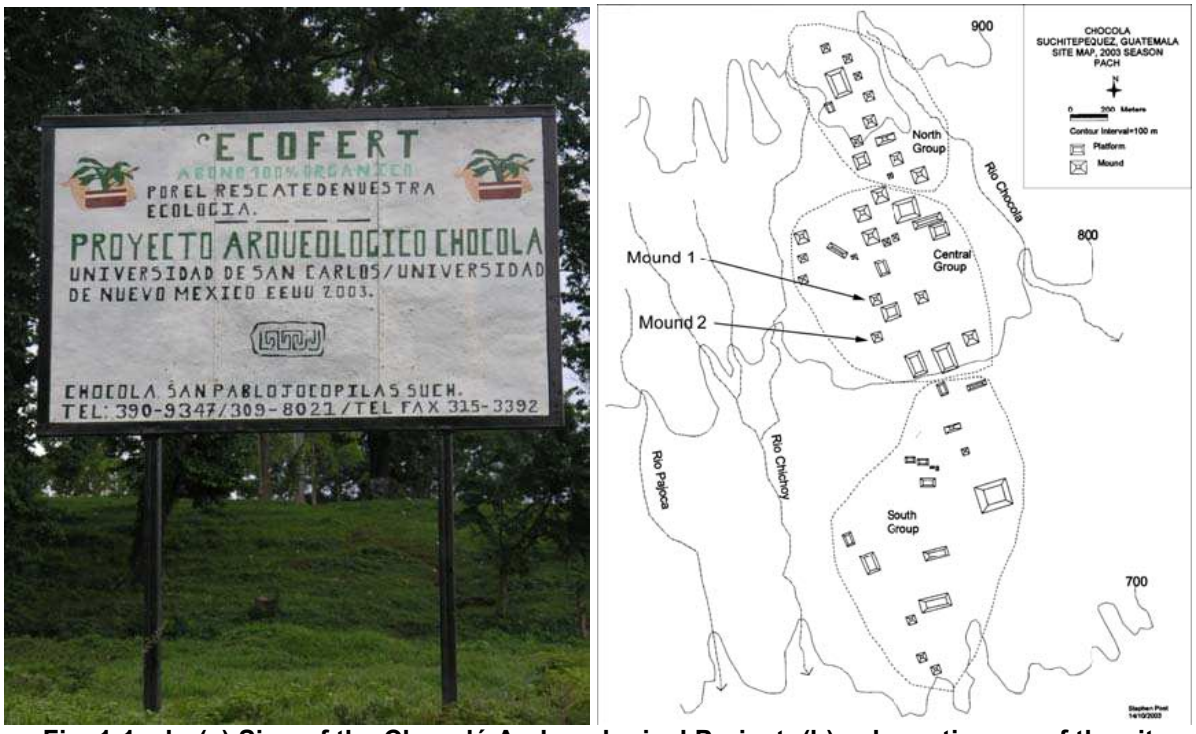


Fig. 1-1a, b: (a) Sign of the Chocolá Archaeological Project; (b) schematic map of the site drawn up after the 2003 season.

The present season benefited from the participation of researchers from Guatemala, the United States, Spain and Australia, and the particular and constant support of many students of the Area of Archaeology from the University of San Carlos, who carried out field and laboratory practices, as well as Ph.D. students of archaeology

from the University of Paris, France, and from the University of Valence, Spain. Also, volunteers from different countries in the world were a part of the project through a system of support developed under the strict collaboration of Earthwatch. Every volunteer and team member was fully accredited by the department of Prehispanic Monuments of the Direction General of Cultural and Natural Patrimony.

Mrs. Sheila Flores was appointed Project Inspector, having visited the field twice. Also, Lic. Ervin S. López, Chief of the Department of Prehispanic Monuments of the IDAEH, and the Assistant Chief, Licda. Yvonne Putzeys González visited the project's facilities in the field. Two lawyers from the Ministry of Culture presented themselves in two occasions to explain to the local inhabitants the national law of protection of the cultural heritage. These visits coincided with the preparation of a map that will show which portions of the site should be delimited so that they may become a part of the nation's patrimony.

When the field season came to an end, almost all ceramic materials remained at the headquarters of the Project, in Chocolá, as requested by the community, while several figurines and complete vessels, together with the lithic materials, were taken to the capital city. Mtro. Edgar Carpio, from the University of San Carlos, has already begun with the lithic analysis. The complete vessels were taken to the Miraflores Museum in the capital city for treatment, where they were left under the surveillance of Dr. Juan Antonio Valdés. All monuments and fragments of monuments have remained in Chocolá under the protection of the ECA and other persons hired by the Project to that end.

Fig. 1-2. Northeast view of the town and mountains from the top of Mound 1.

Backgrounds

Chocolá is a small town with 8,000 inhabitants located in the strip of the Bocacosta, 165 km southwest of the City of Guatemala [Fig. 1-2]. One gets there through the asphalted road that comes from San Antonio Suchitepéquez and then continues to

Santo Tomás La Unión. In spite of the easy access it presents and the large dimensions of this archaeological site, it was only with the recent creation and realization of the Chocolá Archaeological Project that a formal direction was established for the research.

At an archaeological level, only the archaeologist Robert Burkitt [Fig. 1-3] paid attention to it during his stay in the area, in the second decade of the XX century. At that time he prepared a schematic map [Fig. 1-4], excavated three of the mounds, and presented the results in the publication "Excavations at Chocolá", in 1930. Later, Franz Termer, Edwin Shook, John Graham and others visited the place but conducted no formal investigations. Edwin Shook visited the site in 1943 and conducted a surface collection while he described the monuments he observed at the park of the establishment. Over thirty years later he excavated at least two pits within the structure that R. Burkitt had intervened (Mound 2) in 1978-79.[1] This time he was accompanied by J. Graham, who provided the PACH with slides of Shook's work, among other interesting things.

Fig. 1-3. Robert Burkitt.

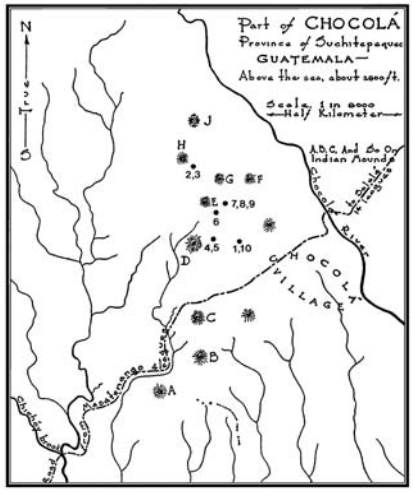


Figure 3. Burkitt's map showing presumed site core (Burkitt 1930).

Fig. 1-4. Burkitt's schematic map (Burkitt 1930).

Geographic Setting

The region of the Bocacosta, where Chocolá is located, is a very thin strip of land which extends transversally from the department of San Marcos to Jutiapa. It is located on the mountain slopes of the Sierra Madre, in the steep descent from the Altiplano to the Pacific coastal plains, with elevations of 300 to 2,500 m above sea level. Rainfalls reach the highest levels in the country, with pluviometric maximums

[1] See Shook, Notas de Campo 241-1943 *Conferencias, Costa Sur y Altiplano occidental de Guatemala,* pp. 68-74. Departamento de Arqueología, Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, and Shook 1978 Enero-Febrero, Chocolá, Departamento de Arqueología, Universidad del Valle de Guatemala.

that take place from June to September [Fig. 1-5]; the temperature values increase as one gradually descends towards the Pacific littoral.[2]

Fig. 1-5. Heavy rain falling on Chocolá , and the old general headquarters area of the Finca Chocolá.

The dominant topography is rough, with steep slopes and a serious risk of erosion. The soils of volcanic origin are fertile, and Chocolá still has natural, primary forests and large areas with coffee trees under other different shadow trees. This region has large and middle size establishments where coffee plantations prevail, a development that was first encouraged around the mid- XIX century, and which has passed through a series of stages along time, although only nowadays it has begun to be perceived under an environmental view, to the point of being called "the friendly crop". Recently, it has been promoted so that it may be considered as an artificial forest.

The Village of Chocolá

Chocolá is a Kiche' derived word: "Chok' La Ta", which in Spanish stands for *"Pase adelante, señor"* or *"Bienvenido sea usted, señor"* ("Do come in, sir", or "Wellcome, sir")[3] stressing the kindness and hospitality of the local inhabitants. A similar tradition indicates that when some important lord promenaded in the area, the neighbors

[2] http://www.insivumeh.gob.gt/meteorologia/zonas/climaticas.htm.
[3] Monografía Mínima de Chocolá: 2001, pp. n.n.

would greet him with the above phrase. A different aspect of such derivation may correspond to the very extended and profound history of trade in the region, with different populations coming in and out both for buying or selling. It is suggestive that just a few kilometers north there is a second village bearing the name of Xojolá. Francis Gall, in his Geographic Dictionary of Guatemala (1983) discusses the possibility of the following etymology: "Chocol-já… may derive from the Maya Chocomol = heat and já as in há = water, in other words, hot water" (Gall 1983 vol. I). A different hypothesis dealt with by some members of the research team favor Michael D. Coe's view when he quotes Tedlock on the possibility that the word may derive from the K'iche' "Chocola'j", "to drink chocolate together" (Coe and Coe 1996:63, 118-121), given the fact that these lands were known to be rich in cacao plantations, both during prehispanic times and early in the colonial era. One might think that it derives from the Náhuatl word *chocolatl*, as Nahuatlisms are common in the Altiplano and coastal areas of Guatemala, but as suggested by Coe there is no such word in any early Náhuatl dictionary (op. cit.: 117). A very recent approach concerning the etymology of Chocolá has been brought forth by Ruud Van Akkeren during the last Symposium for Archaeological Investigations in Guatemala, presenting us with one more version to think about: "The Mud's Place". (Van Akkeren, in press).

Chocolá is among the highest and freshest regions of the slope to the Altiplano at a height of 600-825 m above sea level [Fig. 1-6]. The mountains are close-by and

Fig. 1-6. Location of Chocolá just below the Sierras Madres and the volcanoes.

usually fade away in the fog, while the sea appears as a white fringe in the horizon. From the mounds of the site (and those of the village), one may perceive the volcanoes Zunil, Santa María and Tolimán [Fig. 1-7] in the mountain range of the Sierra Madre. The surface in the region has the overall appearance of an undulating plain of shrubs, with agricultural patches, but it also has countless deep gorges that remain unnoticed unless one reaches the precise spot [Fig. 1-8]. This is important at the time of considering the movements of the ancient traders and settlers of the region.

Fig. 1-7. The volcanoes, high above Chocolá.

Fig. 1-8. An undulating plain with gorges.

The soil is fertile and well irrigated. Presently, Chocolá has several micro-industries, such as bamboo and wood-derived crafts, and blacksmithing. Their commercial significance is still evident through the communal market where traders from Santo Tomás La Unión and others from the Altiplano gather to sell their products. The community is organized in different sectors: El Centro, El Calvario, El Mercado, Cerro Grande, El Salón, Cerro Partido, IAN Casitas, IAN Tarrales, El Toronjal, El Ixcanalero, Socorro, Pacacó and El Hato.[4] The complexity of Chocolá as a political entity is evident while sharing and competing for power is a part of the local dynamics, even though the village is still small in size.

Associative Peasant Enterprise (*Empresa Asociativa Campesina)* ECA Chocolá

The Chocolá Agrarian Community, ECA Chocolá, is located 8 kilometers away in a northeastern direction from the municipal capital of San Pablo Jocopilas; it is located 12 kilometers away from Mazatenango, department capital of Suchitepéquez [Fig. 1-9]. It has an approximate territorial extension of 19 *caballerías* or 49.5 blocks[5] although by 1920 it already included 60 *caballerías*.

[4] Monografía Mínima de Chocolá: Op. Cit.; 2001, pp. n.n.
[5] Monografía Mínima de Chocolá: Op. Cit.; 2001, pp. n.n.

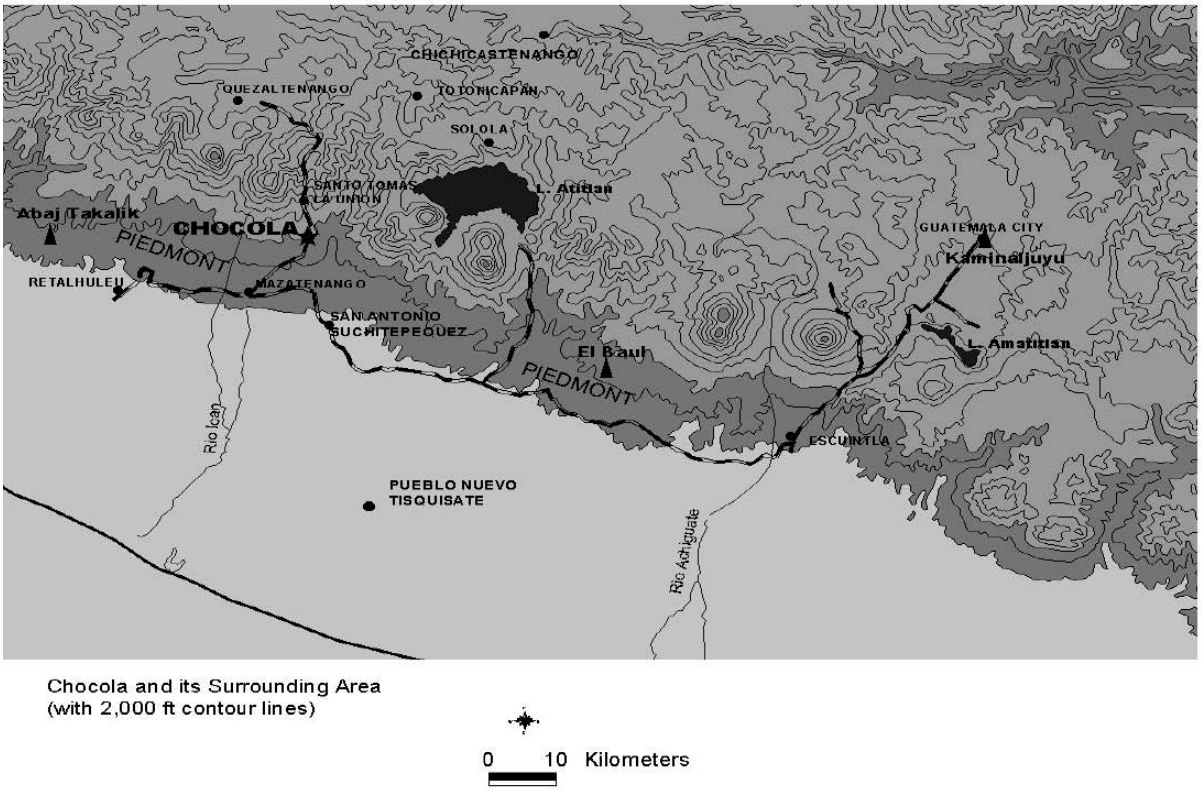


Fig. 1-9. Location of Chocolá at the Bocacosta.

Because of its territorial extension, this is among the largest *fincas* and/or communities within the national territory; it is crossed by the main road that connects the towns of San Antonio Suchitepéquez and Santo Tomás La Unión.[6] To the north it is limited by the finca Santa Isabel, town of Santo Tomás La Unión, and the Lolemí agrarian community, presently a part of ECA. To the south it is limited by the finca Basilea and labor terrains owned by the town of San Antonio Suchitepéquez, to the east by the finca Olimpia which belongs to Santo Tomás La Unión and the agrarian community ECA La Ladrillera, and to the west by the agrarian community ECA Madremía. ECA Chocolá "is formed by peasants that benefited from the process of agrarian transformation, who are constituted in a collectivity under a common management, to work the land directly and personally in an efficient and rational way, contributing their work, industry, service or other assets in the pursuit of improving the production in the fields to satisfy their own needs, to trade, transform or industrialize their products and to proportionally distribute the contributions, profits or losses resulting from each fiscal period."[7]

This organization is integrated by two major bodies: 1) body of Direction, composed by the Community Assembly and the Board of Directors; and 2) body of Management, formed by the Surveillance Board and the Production, Marketing, Finances, Water, Social Participation and Security Committees.[8]

[6] Ibid.; 2001, pp. n.n.
[7] Ibid: 2001, pp. n.n.
[8] Diario de Centroamérica, 6 de Julio, 1984.

Fig. 1-10. Lombriculture.

Presently, there is an ongoing project in Chocolá which is involved in the production of organic fertilizers using the pulp of coffee [Fig. 1-10]. “Lombriculture” has to do with the use of worms for the transformation of coffee pulp into an organic fertilizer, and this is a new biotechnology that is being developed with the main objective of obtaining two products of paramount importance for human beings: humus, and worm flour, the first as the best organic fertilizer, and the second, as an outstanding source of protein for feeding animals.[9]

Fig. 1-11a, b. Rivers and creeks from Chocolá.

[9] http://mail.export.com.gt/website/proyecto/htm.

Physiography of Chocolá

The soil where the archaeological site of Chocolá is located comprises an area represented by igneous rocks of volcanic origin, andesites, dacites, basalts and rhyolites, corresponding to the Upper Tertiary and Quaternary periods.[10] In terms of agriculture, the soils are still very fertile and there is an abundance of water, very regular, predictable and well drained, or at least that is how it must have been in ancient times. There are several minerals such as mica and taxcal (lose fragments of porous andesitic rock in decomposition; it is rich in hematine and has pastel colors).

In addition to the heavy rainfalls in Chocolá, the presence of abundant creeks around the site [Fig. 1-11a, b] makes the area a particular propitious setting for growingn multiple products, including, in our opinion (see below) the cacao in prehispanic times. The village and archaeological site are surrounded by the rivers Camaché, Chocolá or Nimá in its eastern part, and by other streams that flow to the Nahualate River. To the west the rivers of La Montañita, Chichoy, Arroyo Gorgonato and others are found, all flowing to the Ixtacapa River.

The main house of the finca has running waters of a ditch formed by two affluents, the Patzín and the Camaché. The waters of this ditch serve in different ways, and are used at the workshop to move the machines employed in carpentry and mechanical works [Fig. 1.12a, b], as the driving force for the lathes driven by water power, and for the humid beneficiation of coffee. In ancient times it generated electric power through an electric power plant. Chocolá has a network of potable water fit to supply 90% of the population.[11]

Fig. 1-12a, b. Workshop and beneficiation.

[10] Ibid: 2001, pp. n.n.
[11] Ramírez: Op. Cit.; 2000, pp. n.n.

The study of this water resource has been taken into consideration by the PACH after the discovery in 2003 of three canals or irrigation ditches in Mound 15, at the northern end of the site; as a consequence of intensive excavations in 2004 the ditches found have now added up to seven, and have clearly shown to be irrigation ditches to carry water, and a draining system to evacuate waters from one place to the other (see Chapter 6). In any case, there is little doubt regarding the concern of the ancient Chocolá settlers to concentrate this resource to use it and benefit from it in the growing fields, which we assume extended in the southern portion of the site, where large residential platforms are located. The overabundance of water in Chocolá is and has been used through clever constructions for an adequate management. Nowadays, some irrigation ditches are exposed on the surface, and there are underground pipes that carry the water from its place of origin to people, and are maintained by water committees by sector, while in post colonial times they would use aqueducts, tanks, and vents; the evidence obtained by the Project would be pointing to large underground pipes [Fig. 1-13a, b].

Fig. 1-13a, b. Aqueduct to workshop.

Ethnohistoric Information on the Bocacosta Region.

The *Título de los Señores de Totonicapán* includes the account of the expedition of the K'iche' leaders who attempted to find and defeat all their enemies and to survey and take possession of the mountains and valleys; when the Cakzay took possession of their lands, they took as well the name of Ahzamayaque, a village in the coast of Suchitepéquez which is today known as Samayac, a neighbor of Mazatenango and Zapotitlán; the document also refers to the place called Chacalat Nagual by the mouth or pass of Samalá, Siván, and the mouth of the Reve, a sea branch, where the measurements of the lands that were to be occupied by the Yaquiab were completed (they descended from the Toltecs who emigrated jointly with Guatemalan groups), and established the landmarks for the territories of the Yaquiab and the Mazatecs (a population originated in the Soconusco region).[12]

[12] Título de los Señores de Totonicapán: 1995, pp. 187-190.

The *Memorial de Sololá* explains that the Caqchikel (when they were still united to the K'iche') headed to the localities known as Panpatí and Payan Chocol, and then reached Chitulul; this episode refers to the struggle between the Caqchikel and the Tzutujil for Lake Atitlán, which was divided in several portions: that of the south and southwest, occupied by peoples of Tzutujil race and tongue; those of the north and east, occupied by several villages founded by the Caqchikel; and that of the west, where the peoples with a K'iche' origin settled down. This manuscript tells as well about the Caqchikel who fought a war against Panatacat (presently Escuintla, a Pipil town mentioned by Alvarado in his *Relación a Cortés* under the name of "Yscuintepeque"). At the same time, it tells about the arrival of the Spaniards to Xepit and Xetulul, where they conquered every town; Xetulul was translated by the Mexicans as Zapotitlán, and corresponds to the Pacific coastal region in the modern department of Suchitepéquez.[13]

The major peoples marched to war and conquest and made incursions among the Achí Indians from the coast, who called themselves the people and site of Xetulul, and that was why the people from Mazatenango, Cuyotenango, Zapotitlán, Samayaque, and Sambó, among others, brought cacao and pataxte to the main chieftain, Don Francisco Izquin Ahpalotz y Nehaib, acknowledging him as king and obeying him as tributaries; the Achí Indians surrendered to this chieftain the rivers Zamalá, Ucuz, Nil and Xab. Other chieftains surrendered Naguatecat, Ayutecat, Mazatán and Tapaltecat (ancient villages located in the Soconusco coast) and back to Xicalapa, where the Quiquizat River runs (Tiquisate)[14]. The territories of the Caqchikel in the early XVI century included the lands that today comprise almost the entire department of Chimaltenango, the department of Sacatepéquez, the northwestern corner of the department of Guatemala, the north end of Escuintla, the northeastern portion of Suchitepéquez, and the area located north of Lake Atitlán, in the department of Sololá.[15]

Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán mentions the journey of the *Adelantado* across de towns of Zapotitlán (San Antonio Suchitepéquez), where on the other side of the bridge across the Zamalá River he fought fierce battles against the local Indians, with their final surrender to the obedience of the King of Spain; referring to the countless and large cities and populations encountered by the Spanish conquerors, the chronicler mentions Utatlán, Tecpangoathemala, Mixco, Huehuetenango, Chalchitán, Pochuta, and one Caqchikel fortress named Parrasquín, which may be seen while descending from Totonicapa towards the southern coast and which was a memorable and densely populated garrison formed by eighty thousand men at arms, to protect the Caqchikel kingdom from the hostilities of the K'iche' and the Tzutujil Indians.[16] The *Título de los Indios de Santa Clara La Laguna* states that the K'iche' lands included Totonicapán, Queltzaltenango, San Martín Zapotitlán, San Gaspar Yabacoj, Cuyotenango, San Bartolomé Mazatenango, San Francisco Zapotitlán and Santa María Samayac.[17]

In the Letter that Diego Garcés wrote to the *Real Audiencia de Guatemala* (possibly in 1560) concerning his visit to several towns of the Suchitepeque under his jurisdiction and what was it that each one of them could tribute, with specifications about the *encomenderos*, he mentions, for example, San Juan de Nagualapa, from

[13] Memorial de Sololá: 1995, pp. 64-65, 95.
[14] Título de la Casa Ixquin-Nehaib, Señora del Territorio de Otzoya: 1984, pp. 79-81.
[15] Polo Sifontes: 1986, pp. 38.
[16] Fuentes y Guzmán: 1979; IX, pp. 17, 61, 91.
[17] Título de los Indios de Santa Clara La Laguna: 1984, pp. 179.

the *encomienda* of Gaspar Arias de Ávila, the cacao richest town along the coast; San Antonio, from the *encomienda* of Juan Méndez de Sotomayor and Francisco de Ayllón, villages so rich in cacao like those from Nagualapa; Santo Tomás, from the *encomienda* of Gaspar Arias de Ávila and Alonso Gutiérrez Monzón, two leagues away from the Suchitepeques, to the portion of the sierra of Totonicapa, a mild land and not to good for growing cacao for it was cooler: San Gregorio, one additional league up hill, near the sierra; Zamayaque, from the *encomienda* of Alonso Gutiérrez de Monzón, one league away from San Antonio Suchitepeque, a village of cacao growers, though not as rich as those of Suchitepeques; San Pablo, from the *encomienda* of Lorenzo de Godoy, Juan de Morales y de Cevallos, and Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo; Zambo, from the *encomienda* of the secretary Diego de Robledo, Gaspar Arias de Ávila and the minor Diego de la Barrera, two leagues away from Zamayaque, is a mild town; Zapotitlán, from the *encomienda* of Juan Maldonado de Guzmán and doña Juana de Sayavedra; Mazatenango and Cuyotenango, subjects of the town of Zapotitlán, with the best cacao.[18]

Surprisingly, in the map that includes *La Relación de Zapotitlán*, written in the year 1579, it is possible to locate towns such as Tolimán, San Juan Nahualapa, San Francisco Zapotitlán, Santo Tomás, San Antonio Suchitepeque, Samayac, San Pablo, Mazatenango, etc. The notary Juan de Niebla, refers that there were no Spanish towns, as the inhabitants were merchants and cacao traders who moved from this province to New Spain bringing clothes, fabrics and linens for the Indians. These already constituted peoples and permanent dwellers used three tongues, Mexican, Achi and Mame. The *Relación* contains as well a document from the Indians of the Province of Zapotitlán, where they have emphasizes their K'iche' ancestry.[19]

In the XVIII century, Pedro Cortés y Larraz, in his *Descripción Geográfico-Moral de la Diócesis de Goathemala*, refers to a San Antonio Suchitepéques as the sixth of the 10 provinces of the Archbishopric, which was composed of six parishes, as follows: San Antonio Suchitepéquez, Mazatenango, Cuyotenango, Retaluleuh, Sapotitlán, Samayac and San Pablo Jocopilas.[20] He explains that the parish of San Pablo Jocopilas was located one quarter league north of Zamayac; it was the seat of the parish together with two other towns: Santo Thomás, three leagues away, and San Miguel, seven leagues away from the seat; the language spoken was the K'ich'e, and it was in charge of the Franciscan brother Fr. Miguel Arrevillaga; the parish of San Antonio Suchitepeques was located three short leagues away from Zamayac to the east, and the route was crossed by three rivers: Istacapa, Pachuca and Chicoy, which were the same that were crossed from Xocopilas to their annexes to form the plentiful Nahualate River; it was directed by the priest don Teodoro Mendizábal; the mother tongue was the Sutugil, though some other foreign tongues had been introduced, such as the Kaqchikel and the K'ich'e, while many also spoke Castilian; the town was located in the plains and occupied a large space because it was very densely populated, there were long streets with no houses other than the existing (earlier) ruins.[21]

Tomás Gage notes that the main goods brought from the southern coast to Guatemala originated in the provinces of Soconusco and Suchitepéquez, where people grow cacao, annatto trees, mecasuchil, vanilla and other drugs used to

[18] Carrasco: 1982, pp. 89-95.
[19] Relaciones Geográficas del Siglo XVI: Guatemala: 1982, pp. 25-60.
[20] Cortés y Larraz: 1958; I, pp. 18.
[21] Cortés y Larraz: 1958; II, pp. 271-278.

prepare the Chocoláte, some indigo and kermes berries picked in the surroundings of San Antonio, capital city of all the Suchitepéquez.[22]

The ancient Maya harvested cacao in great volumes, and used the grains as currency and for the beverage that only the ruling class could afford: the chocolate (Chocolátl); the growing fields comprised a large extension of the Pacific coastal plains, up to an altitude of 600 m. Huge amounts of cacao were sent to the Aztecs to trade and as a tribute, as well as to the Spaniards, who managed to increase the production. with a huge toll in natives' lives. The great decadence of cacao in the early XIX century was caused by the South American competition; similarly, there was a decrease in the production of cotton and kermes berries, due to the imports of aniline-dyed linens.

The Arrival of Coffee in the XIX century

By the mid XIX century Guatemala witnessed the introduction of a large scale coffee production; between the years 1850 and 1925, the quick growth of coffee plantations seduced those who lived in the Altiplano and the coast, and the product began to be grown at an altitude of 350 to 1,550 m; this event caused that the Indians from the Altiplano (Mame, K'iche', Tzutujil and Caqchikel) settled in the lowlands along the entire Pacific Bocacosta. Coffee has modified the original green cover of this region, for it requires some special shadow trees, and therefore, they have been artificially intensified.[23]

By the time of the Liberal Reformation of 1871, the land owners had already subdued a large number of laborers, and Guatemala as a whole had transformed itself in a *finca*. Costa Cuca possessed extremely productive lands, very adequate for growing coffee, therefore, more towns were founded in the surroundings, with the incorporation of thousands of men and women to the production of coffee; the earliest coffee planters of the southwest devoted to grow coffee in his old properties, motivated by the success it had had in Costa Rica and by the support that the conservative government had provided, by forcing the handing over to private individuals and mainly foreigners, of the lands that by right and lawfully belonged to the peasant communities. One of the first businessmen who somehow managed to penetrate and settle down in community lands was the Spaniard José Guardiola, in Suchitepéquez, with the *comuneros* of San Antonio, after buying the land from the Catholic Church through the presbyter Felipe Marroquín.

This is how the historic memory of the modern town of Chocolá begins, with the name of *don* José Guardiola [Fig. 1-14], who on the 27 of August of 1864 bought the hacienda, built a mill, and introduced the sugar cane plantations. This practice would be revised over one decade later and sugar would be transferred to Palo Gordo, at that time a part of the lands purchased for the hacienda. At Chocolá, the sowing of coffee was initiated, and José Guardiola made himself a name as the first agricultural engineer to invent a horizontal coffee-dryer machine in the territory of Guatemala. The dryers quickly became very popular, and their use and commercialization spread with some degree of success; the workshop and the beneficiation that still stand, are witnesses to this industrial development, and

[22] Gage: 1967; VII, pp. 33.
[23] McBryde: 1969; I, pp. 111-118.

needless to say, of the events of the history to come. On the 20 of December of 1875 the transaction deed celebrated between the municipality of *ladinos* and Indians of San Antonio Suchitepéquez and José Guardiola was signed before the notary H. Irondo. By the time, the title deed referred to it as Finca Chocolá, and its function as a sugar mill had been specified [20/12/1875. Archivo INTA folio NO. 03 y 04) (Calderón 2000:67).

Fig. 1-14. Don José Guardiola's patent.

The establishment posed legal problems regarding the purchase and sale of lands, as it is apparent in the *Fondo Documental de la Escribanía de Gobierno*, located in the premises of the *Archivo General de Centro América*. The consulted documents include: Suchitepéquez Package 6 Dossier 14 corresponding to the year 1855; whereby Refugio Obregón trustee of Mrs. Matías Vásquez landmarks' owner of the Chocolá lands accuses the Surveyor Don Francisco Colmenares of causing her damage in the measurement of one portion of the land sold to Presbyter Don Felipe Marroquín. The latter mentioned requests a certification of the title deed of the terrain called Chocolá, in terms of San Antonio and Santo Tomás, the land in question measures 54 7/8 *caballerías*. This may be seen in the Suchitepéquez manuscript Package 6 Dossier 15 of the year 1858.

The above Documentary Fund includes: Suchitepéquez Package 7, Dossier 2, corresponding to the year 1875, and in this document Señor Don José Guardiola, from Spain, already appears as the owner. By this year, discontent spread among the neighbors of San Antonio, who complain about the Surveyor Don Juan de Dios Morales for not having properly taken the measurements of the terrain. According to the document, Mr. Guardiola is in possession of the title deeds while the neighbors are not. The other manuscript is Suchitepéquez Packete 7 Dossier 3, corresponding to the year 1876. This document contains the final demarcations between the neighbors of San Antonio and Don José Guardiola. Therefore, it includes a final plan, up to that moment.

The subsequent moving of countless workers and their families made the population throughout the region of the Bocacosta grow larger; they used to live in hamlets and/or belonged to communities located in the Altiplano, and had no growing fields in their places of origin, therefore, as it had happened during the times of Spanish domination, the reason for such shifts were the purely economic and political interests of the landowners who through the State, had passed laws that responded to their needs. By 1864, the landowner Justo Rufino Barrios had become the legal owner of the plantation "San José el Porvenir", located within the territory of the San Pablo community, in San Marcos; similarly, the Chocolá plantation in Suchitepéquez, was turned to Guardiola's hands in 1874.

In Guatemala, the foreigners displayed their skills to successfully manage their coffee plantations, in such a way that many valuable and famous plantations ended up as the property of German companies that obtained large revenues on their investments.[24] Through the acquisition of plantations and uncultivated lands that were transformed in prosperous plantations, the Germans in Guatemala controlled one third of the coffee production in the country, and two thirds of the coffee exports to Europe. [25] An infrastructure at the service of these companies came to life to intensify the trade, transportation and shipping of coffee, including the opening of banks, the building of better roads, new seaports, railways to the coasts, and power companies.[26]

In spite of his success, Guardiola makes the decision to sell his property in Chocolá to a company known as Plantaciones "Chocolá", founded in Hamburg on February 2, 1891 by means of a partnership of German bankers and coffee planters through their representative in Guatemala, Enrique Neutze (Wagner 1991:151). The transaction was arranged in four hundred thousand American gold pesos. The agreement established that payments were to be deposited in the house of the bankers Baring 'Brothers & Company' from London in American gold or its equivalent amount in Sterling Pounds.[27] Thus, Enrique Neutze came to own, at least in the papers, the Plantagen Gesellschaft Chocolá Neutze. The plantations, the premises, the natural resources and even the laborer young settlers were a part of the property. As of then, several transactions would take place between the German citizens and their companies for the ownership of the Chocolá lands [Fig. 1-15].

[24] Castellanos Cambranes 1985: 118-119, 209, 257-259, 527.
[25] Villatoro: http://www.lahora.com.gt/18-10-2k/paginas/cult_1htm#n1
[26] Castellanos Cambranes: Op. Cit.; 1985: 60-61.
[27] For a more complete reading of the clauses of this agreement, see Calderón 2000: 69-71. Regina Wagner refers that the amount paid was of 2.6 million Deutschmarks, and that in 1900 the agreement was modified to include the adjacent grasslands of "Madre Mía" in the district of Santo Tomás Perdido, Cuyotenango, in Costa Grande, Suchitepéquez, which jointly represented 56 caballerías (Wagner 1991:151).

Fig. 1.15. View of Mound 1, Chocolá, early in the 20 century.

On December 14, 1923, the testimony of the purchase and sale title deed from the Chocolá Plantagen Gesellschaft in Hamburgh in favor of The Central American Plantation Corporation (CAPCO) was celebrated, before the notary Javier Bolaños. His trustees were Messrs. David E. Sapper and Juan Goebel (Calderón 2000:73).

The shaping of the identity of the modern inhabitants of Chocolá may be traced back to those days, with an emphasis on the migration of families from the Altiplano in Totonicapán, and from Quiché and Huehuetenango[28] to work as laborers in the plantation. Robert Burkitt notes that the inhabitants of Chocolá had their origins in Nahualá and Ixtahuacán, and that their language was "… a Maya language, a Kichechí dialect" (Burkitt 1930:5).

According to the data provided by Wagner (1991:152), by 1900 Chocolá was already one of the largest sugar and coffee producers of Guatemala, with some 560,000 coffee trees in production. It was administrated by Czudnochowski and later by Fedor Deininger.

In the 1910's, the imperialisms both from Germany and the U.S. started to compete for the political and economical institutions in Guatemala that served their requirements, a struggle of interests that was resolved around the beginning of the 1940's when the German estates were expropriated; this resulted in the strengthening of the political influence of the United States in Guatemala, and the consequent decay of the German power.[29]

World War II and the Nationalization of the German Estates

Since World War I, the United States had been Latin America's major commercial partner, due to their geographic location and their technological modernization,

[28] Monografía Mínima de Chocolá Junta Directiva 2001:4.
[29] Castellanos Cambranes: 1992, pp. 341-342.

however, World War II provided the opportunity to consolidate this process, aided by the political situation of the Old Continent.

Hitler seized power in 1933, and realized that Germany imported from Latin America almost double of its exports to those countries. Guatemala was the third country, after Argentina and Brazil. 45.3% of the coffee exports in Guatemala in 1932-33 went to Germany (Wagner 2001:170). Hitler decided to pay debtors with Deutschemarks, with the condition that they were used to buy German products, thereby fixing their balance of trade. The measure was enforced in 1934, and marked the decrease of the exports of Guatemalan coffee to Germany, in favor of the U.S.

After 1939, things began to complicate for the Germans in Guatemala. The U.S. pressure for relegating their commercial activity intensified. Chocolá would be a witness of such international changes. Wagner (1991: 366-390) discusses the position taken by Jorge Ubico with respect to the reorientation of the coffee exports, and even though he consented in limiting the opportunities of German exporters and switched his own activities towards the north, the consuming capacity of the entire Guatemalan product by the U.S. was not fully positive for local coffee planters; the market was saturated and between 1939-1940 the prices collapsed.

Ubico was unable to get rid of the Germans that fast. One of his earliest measures was having the Ministry of Agriculture to control and regulate the coffee exports, with a 75% for the United States, and the remaining 25% for other countries; like this measure was not good enough, in 1941 the exports of national products to non-American countries was banned, even though 40% of the coffee production in the country was in German hands.

The economic returns of the German establishments in Guatemala was undisputable, and therefore acting impulsively was not advisable; a decree was created through which the Central Bank of Guatemala would assume control of the establishments marked in black lists that were to be published first in the United States and later in local newspapers. As to the situation of labor, Ubico suppressed the habilitations and the indebted labor, but introduced other procedures to keep peasants compulsively linked to the production of coffee, for example the vagrancy act.

On December 8, 1941, after the Pearl Harbour attack, Ubico summoned the Assembly and passed a decree that restricted the constitutional guarantees to the citizens of Japan, Germany and Italy that had resided in the country for as long as the war had lasted. On June 16, 1942, inspectors were commissioned to inventory the assets existing in each establishment, mill, beneficiation or ranch. Early in 1943, according to its own laws and through the Custody of Enemy Property of the United States, that country confiscated the shares of the largest complex of German coffee plantations in Guatemala, CAPCO, inscribed in Wilmington, State of Delaware[30]; immediately after, the Guatemalan state took action in defense of the nation's patrimony, and CAPCO was nationalized (Wagner 1991:372).

[30] "CAPCO, a German capitals enterprise which in 1933 according to Wagner (2001:169) appears as registered in N.Y. and in 1943 according to Wagner (1991:372) in Wilmington, Delaware. Interestingly, this company had a nature broader than the German nationality, as an affiliation criterion. By the time of its intervention, its representatives were Messrs. Morrison, Tucker Graham and Vincent Paul Downey O'Donogue. Clearly, they were not German" (Paredes Umaña 2003. Tercera Práctica de Campo. Escuela de Historia. PACH).

By 1941, the process of deportation of German citizens whose names were in black lists was being enforced[31]; this took place throughout the conflict, and the individuals involved were first sent to concentration camps in the United States, where some chose to stay in prison until the end of the war and others were sent through different means to the Old Continent. The German citizens deported from Chocolá and the surrounding areas appeared on a list published in *Nuestro Diario* on January 19, 1943, with a headline that read, "list of 141 Germans deported in January, 1943, to the 'Alien Detention Station', Kennedy, Texas" (Wagner 1991: 431-34).

Based on the cadastre drawn up in 1943 for a more accurate control of the coffee plantations in the country, the confiscatory measures against the Germans were facilitated. The Government passed the decree No. 3115 of June 22, 1944, which stipulated the expropriation and nationalization of every coffee plantation owned by German citizens, the bonds, stocks and shares they had in some or several of the expropriated establishments, and proceeded accordingly through decree No. 3119 of June 26, 1944.[32] Thus, Chocolá became a national *finca* during the brief administration of General Ponce Vaides, who created the Department of National and Intervened Rustic *Fincas* (Wagner 1991:375).

The October Revolution and Contemporary History

As of 1945, the first revolutionary government was established. Times had changed in the world, Germany and its allies had lost the war and the United Nations was a new institution that proposed a change of style for international relationships. At a local level, a first essay of democracy was taking place.

In general, historians tend to agree when they speak of a cultural rebirth, the abolition of all sorts of hard labor and the free hiring of manpower, the right for free association, the return of labor organizations that had been banned, the emergence of new political parties, and the free press that so many problems had caused to revolutionary governments, like the incitation to an anti-communist hysteria. The second government could not complete its mandate, as it was overthrown by the "liberationist" party, sponsored by the United States department of intelligence.

The National Agropecuarian Institute, founded around 1945 with its seat in Chocolá and its surroundings, was a project between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Washington Department of Agriculture. G. Aleman Bolaños, in his guide published in 1945 "Vida Agrícola de Guatemala. Las Grandes Fincas, Las Buenas Fincas" (*Agricultural Life in Guatemala. The Large Plantations, the Good Plantations"*), sketched a forthcoming Revolutionary Agricultural Plan.

Chocolá witnessed all of this processes, and we shall now see how this was expressed by local inhabitants in the *Monografía Mínima de Chocolá*, elaborated in 2001 by the Board of Directors of the ECA Chocolá:

"In the year 1952, during the administration of the President of the Republic, at that time Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán, the *finca* Chocolá and annexes were handed over to

[31] Some of the lists were published in the Diario de Centroamérica between April and July, 1942, under the title of "volunteers who wish to be repatriated".
[32] Villatoro: http://lahora.com.gt/18-10-2k/paginas/cult_2htm.

the settler workers of those days, each one being benefited with a fraction of 60 to 90 ropes *(cuerdas)* (…) approximately two years later, the new government of Carlos Castillo Armas (liberationist party)[33] through a decree, determined that Chocolá was to be once again administrated by the State of Guatemala. That is how the Institute for the Agrarian Transformation (INTA) was created, an institute that was in charge and responsible of all the works, production, administration and operation of Finca Chocolá and its Annexes until the year of 1981".

In May, 1952, Decree 900 was passed at the Congress of the Republic, a project for the redistribution of agricultural lands among the landless peasants and laborers, while they began to struggle for their rights against the landowners, on the grounds of the Agrarian Reform.[34] The National Chocolá Finca and Annexes were then distributed among the settlers-laborers, with a benefit for each one of them of a fraction of 60 to 90 ropes.[35]

In 1954, the chiefs of the Army demanded from President Arbenz to take the necessary steps to enforce the Law of the Agrarian Reform and against the rural agitators, but Arbenz paid no attention to such demands and was forced to resign by the Army officers.[36] The liberationist government under Castillo Armas in 1954 issued Decree 31, stipulating that plantation owners were entitled to request the devolution of the lands that had been illegally taken away from them, and that the beneficiaries of Decree 900 were to be deprived of lands; later, in 1956, Decree 559 was passed, stating that those interested were entitled to apply for the plots of land bought and expropriated, provided they did not own any parcel and had not received any land under Decree 900. The Finca Chocolá once again fell under the administration of the State through the Institute for the Agrarian Transformation (INTA), until May, 1981, when it was once again distributed among 1,670 peasants, benefited grantees, through Grant Agreement No. 7-81 of the National Council of Agrarian Transformation, regulated by Decree 15-51 and its reforms, granted as Collective Agrarian Patrimony.

In 1985, the annexes Madre Mía, Lolemí and La Ladrillera had their administrations separated from Chocolá, and in the year 1988 the constitution of the four Associative Peasant Enterprises, ECAS, was created, as a derivation of the enforcement of Decree-Law 67-84, which propitiated its full independence from the State, leaving out the Institute for the Agrarian Transformation, INTA.

The new situation of the Finca Chocolá has propitiated as well the financial support of organizations such as the European Economic Community, which through the Bocacosta Project has financed development projects in the region, for example, the improvement of coffee plantations, the availability of drinkable water, sanitary drainages, the repair of the Coffee Beneficiation, the obtention of machinery and gears, etc., [37] while presently there are five projects funded the European Economic Community whose objectives are to promote the development of specific rural areas in the country, for a total of U$S 45.6 million. Also, the European Community is still attempting to increase the economic activity in poor communities and supporting

[33] Brackets are by the authors.
[34] Gleijeses: 1992, pp. 383.
[35] Monografía Mínima de Chocolá: Op. Cit.; 2001, pp. n.n.
[36] Gleijeses: Op. Cit.; 1992, pp. 383.
[37] Monografía Mínima de Chocolá: Op. Cit.; 2001, pp. n.n.

several productive activities.[38] "Lombriculture", mentioned earlier in this text, represents an alternative economic activity in regard to coffee.

Fig. 1-16. Karl Sapper.

Archaeological Backgrounds [JK: photo by Graham, old town photo]

The first archaeological comment about Chocolá came from Karl Sapper (Sapper 1895) [Fig. 1-16], but it was Robert Burkitt (1930) who inspected part of the site, draw a schematic map with 11 mounds, and excavated three of them, Mound A (probably gone by now), Mound B (Mound 2 or Cerro Partido), and a third, unnumbered one, that he excavated between 1924 and 1928. The results were presented in the report "Excavations at Chocolá", by the University of Pennsylvania (Burkitt 1930: 5-24). Burkitt was frustrated for not having found too many artifacts [Fig. 1-17], and was apparently confused with the earthen constructions that represented the existing mounds, a lack of understanding that probably would not have taken place should he had been aware of the excavations conducted by Messrs. Villacorta (1927) and Manuel Gamio (1926-1927) in K'aminaljuyú since 1910, which defined the use of mud in the architecture of sites from the Altiplano.[39]

[38] Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo; 2002, pp. 13.

[39] During a visit paid to PACH in 2003 by Dr. John Clark, we were suggested that the absence of sherds and the scarce evidence of a long history of human occupation in Mound 2 could be interpreted as an indicator of a very early date, and therefore, time must have been short for depositing artifacts in the construction. On the contrary, the excavation of test pits in Mound 9 produced a large amount of sherds, probably indicating later dates or phases of construction (see Valdés and Kaplan 2003).

Fig. 1-17. Well polished figurine made of white stone recovered by PACH in 2003 at Mound 2, where Burkitt worked in the 1920's.

However, Burkitt's report was extremely interesting in regard to the discovery by farmers of the fragments of an extraordinary basalt sculpture, Monument 1 from Chocolá [Fig. 1-18], a stela dated for the Late Preclassic period with depicted scenes and an iconography almost identical to that of Stela 10 from K'aminaljuyú [Fig. 1-19] (Jones 1986, Kaplan 1995:191, 2001:9, 11, 19-20). The Chocolá monument was taken to the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania (see Chapter 13). It depicts a scene that shows the triumphant sovereign accompanied by icons related to a war event and/or a sacrificial event. The stylistic similarities between this monument and Stela 10 from K'aminaljuyú have been a subject study for Parsons (1986) and Jones (1986) in the past few years, and no doubt point to a probable political relationship between Chocolá and K'aminaljuyú (see Kaplan 1995, 2000a, b).

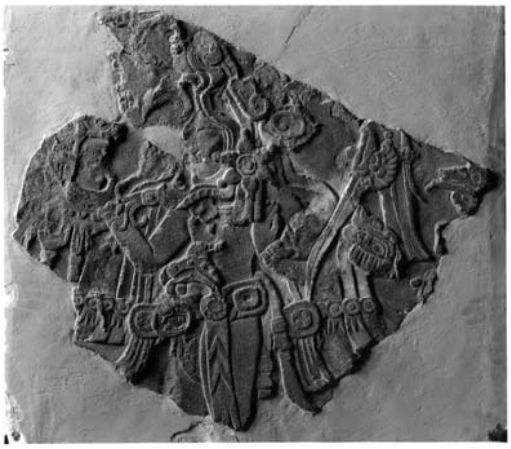
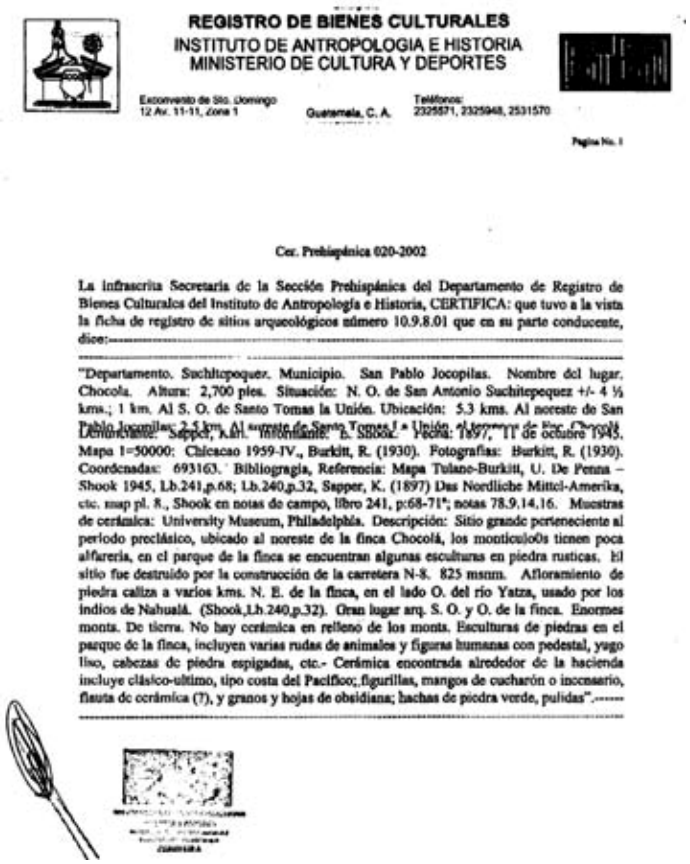


Fig. 1-18. Monument 1, Chocolá (photo Museum of the University of Pennsylvania).

Fig. 1-19. Stella 10, K'aminaljuyú (photo JK).

Edwin M. Shook visited the site in the forties, and it was him who recorded it formally at the Institute of Anthropology and History like an archaeological site,[40] describing it as a “large” and “important” site [Fig. 1-20].



REGISTRO DE BIENES CULTURALES
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La infrascrita Secretaria de la Sección Prehispánica del Departamento de Registro de Bienes Culturales del Instituto de Antropología e Historia, CERTIFICA: que tuvo a la vista la ficha de registro de sitios arqueológicos número 10.9.8.01 que en su parte conducente, dice:----------

"Departamento. Suchitepequez. Municipio. San Pablo Jocopilas. Nombre del lugar. Chocola. Altura: 2,700 pies. Situación: N. O. de San Antonio Suchitepequez +/- 4 ½ kms.; 1 km. Al S. O. de Santo Tomas la Unión. Ubicación: 5.3 kms. Al noreste de San Pablo Jocopilas; 2.5 km. Al [illegible] de Santo Tomas La Unión, al terreno de finc. Chocolá. Informante: Sapper, Karl. Informante: E. Shook. Fecha: 1897, 11 de octubre 1945. Mapa 1=50000: Chicacao 1959-IV., Burkitt, R. (1930). Fotografías: Burkitt, R. (1930). Coordenadas: 693163. Bibliografia, Referencia: Mapa Tulane-Burkitt, U. De Penna – Shook 1945, Lb.241,p.68; Lb.240,p.32, Sapper, K. (1897) Das Nordliche Mittel-Amerika, etc. map pl. 8., Shook en notas de campo, libro 241, p:68-71*; notas 78.9.14.16. Muestras de cerámica: University Museum, Philadelphia. Descripción: Sitio grande perteneciente al periodo preclásico, ubicado al noreste de la finca Chocolá, los montículos tienen poca alfareria, en el parque de la finca se encuentran algunas esculturas en piedra rusticas. El sitio fue destruido por la construcción de la carretera N-8. 825 msnm. Afloramiento de piedra caliza a varios kms. N. E. de la finca, en el lado O. del rio Yatza, usado por los indios de Nahualá. (Shook,Lb.240,p.32). Gran lugar arq. S. O. y O. de la finca. Enormes monts. De tierra. No hay cerámica en relleno de los monts. Esculturas de piedras en el parque de la finca, incluyen varias rudas de animales y figuras humanas con pedestal, yugo liso, cabezas de piedra espigadas, etc.- Cerámica encontrada alrededor de la hacienda incluye clásico-ultimo, tipo costa del Pacifico; figurillas, mangos de cucharón o incensario, flauta de cerámica (?), y granos y hojas de obsidiana; hachas de piedra verde, pulidas".------

Fig. 1-20. The Chocolá record, by Edwin M. Shook.

According to him, the site had about 100 mounds [Fig. 1-21], many of which were 20 m tall or more, but have been destroyed by the increasing construction of infrastructure.

Fig. 1-21. Mound 1, Chocolá.

[40] Monografía Mínima de Chocolá: Op. Cit.; 2001, pp. n.n.

He also reported the occurrence of archaeological remains such as figures and stone altars, sherds, and ceramic figurines spread all over the village. Shook returned to Chocolá in 1978 and excavated a pit or trench [Fig. 1-22]. Franz Termer visited Chocolá during the sixties, when he was conducting excavations at Palo Gordo, a site nearby Chocolá.

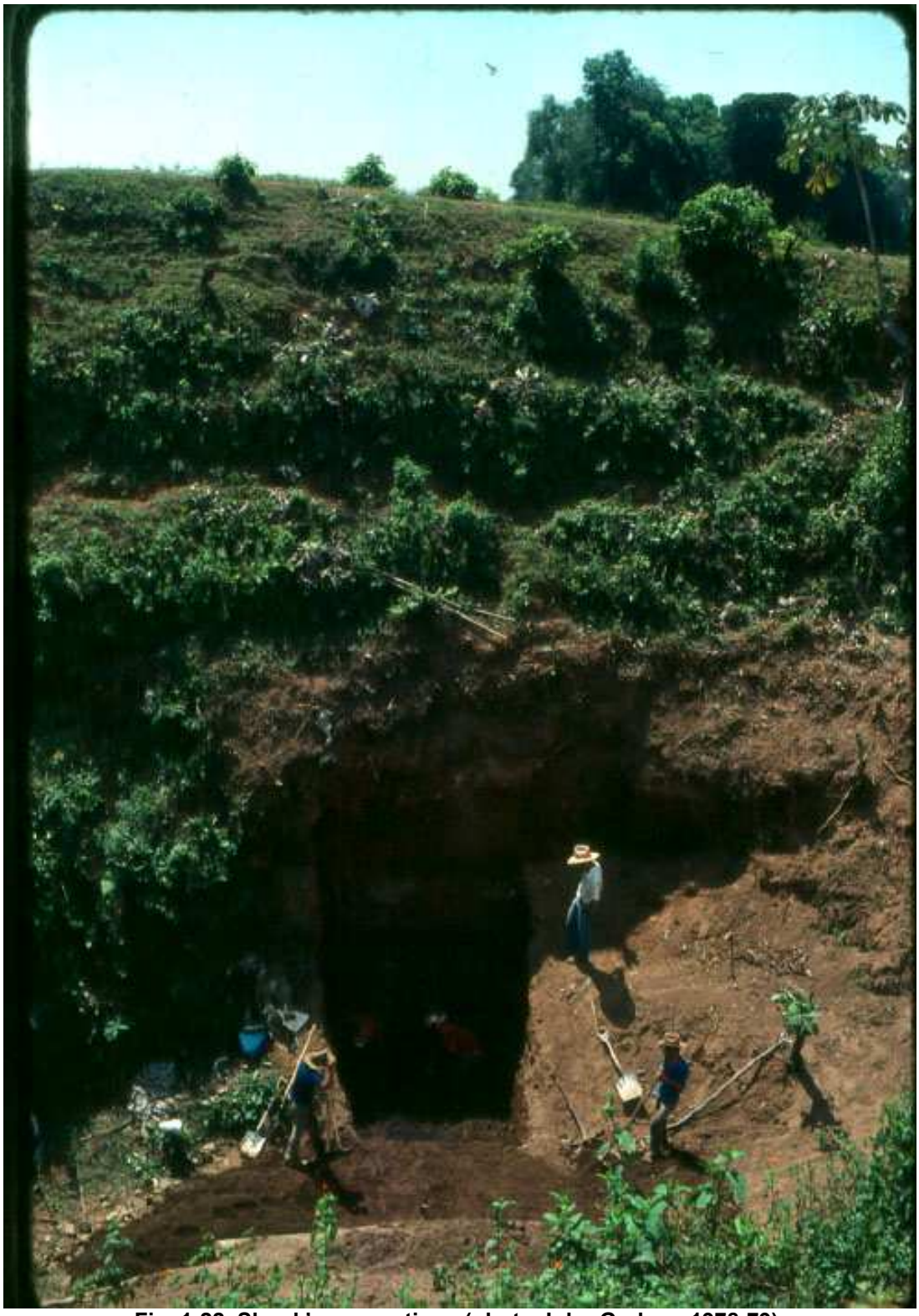

Fig. 1-22. Shook's excavations (photo John Graham 1978-79).

Burkitt excavated Mound B and noted the absence of stone in its construction, something he found extremely awkward in view of the fact that he had conducted excavations at Quiché,

where this type of stony material was used in architecture. He used a methodology of inverted steps and transformed the trench in some sort of stadium [Fig. 1-23], a common system by then in the Near East to understand the stratigraphy.

Fig. 1-23. Mound 2 excavated by Burkitt between the 1920's and 1930's.

He reported an earthen construction, floor levels, sand, charcoal and Preclassic ceramics. When his investigation was completed the trench was left open, and unfortunately, with time, it ended up as a huge modern garbage dump [Fig. 1-24a, b]. This focus of contamination has been almost completely cleared by members of the Chocolá Project during the 2003 and 2004 seasons.

Fig. 24a, b. Clearing Mound 2 of garbage, PACH 2003.

Like we noted earlier, Chocolá is a site which had not been subject of a formal research project with systematic archaeological works, and therefore, there are but a few written reports wherefrom some useful information may be obtained. Because of this and necessarily, the first step in the frame of the investigative activities of PACH was the reconnaissance and inspection of the field, consisting in getting acquainted with the territory and the ancient traits, to develop a research plan and to delimit the areas comprised by the

archaeological site through a systematic study.[41] In the 2003 season this plan was carried out in an area of 4 x 2 kilometers across the site. In 2004, formal mapping continued outside the area covered in 2003, in additional 5.5 x 2 km [Fig. 1-25a, b]. Using very precise benchmarks set in 2003, we also started to map the topography of portions of the site using a total station (see Chapter 3).

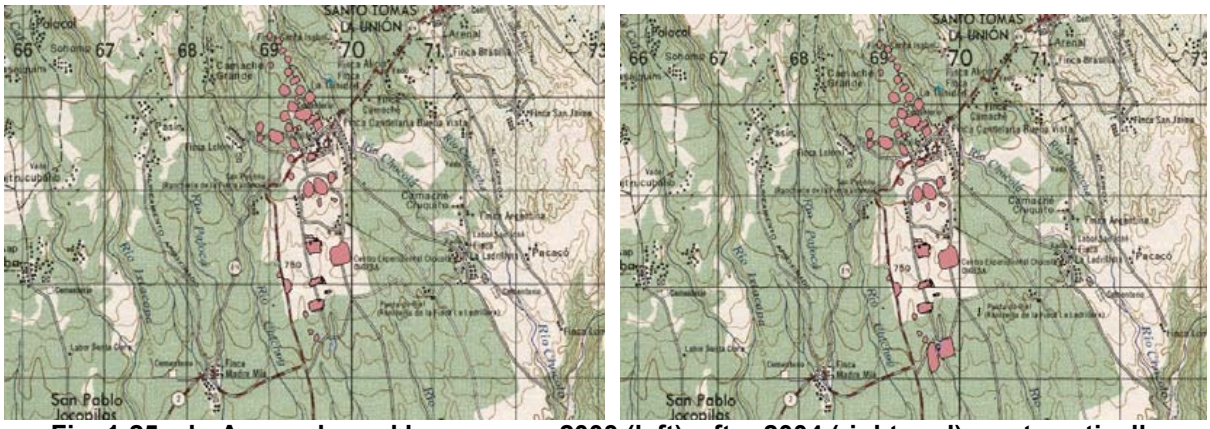

Fig. 1-25a, b. Area enlarged by surveys, 2003 (left), after 2004 (right, red), systematically mapped, and yellow, surveyed.

Theoretical Motifs of the Chocolá Archaeological Project, 2004

Like we said, the second season represented the second year of investigation under the terms of an agreement between Kaplan and IDAEH. The results of the first season were detailed in the 2003 final report submitted to IDAEH. Some introductory information present in the 2003 research proposal is still relevant, though research and findings carried out during the 2003 and 2004 seasons have somehow changed the scope but not the direction and general focus of the Project. The 2003 proposal read as follows:

"Considerong the data available so far, we know that the southern area of Guatemala and Mexico witnessed innovative developments during the Preclassic period, which have remarkably influenced the future of other neighboring cultures. However, there is a lack at times of a clear notion of the determining events and processes that shaped the history of the southern Guatemala region, that have long ago given it its assumed seminal character. The investigations conducted in the past decade at K'aminaljuyú and Tak'alik' Ab'aj have shown the close relationship existing between both areas, consequently considering that the sites located in-between must have been economically subordinated to them. The position of Chocolá may provide an answer to that question and to several other uncertainties, including issues concerning the processes of evolution that may have led to the further creation of polities within the Maya world."

"Chocolá is an archaeological site that was investigated solely by Robert Burkitt (1930) at the beginning of the past century, and is located in the region of the Boca Costa, in the township of San Pablo Jocopilas, department of Suchitepéquez. As of the evidence present in the field, it must have been one of the largest and most significant centers of the region during the Preclassic period, with very tall mounds and several Preclassic sculptures that show historic evidences of links with K'aminaljuyú, the most significant polity in the Altiplano, located 120 km to the east."

[41] Kaplan: Op. Cit.; 2003, pp. 10.

“It is very probable that at some point during the Late Preclassic period, Chocolá served as a secondary regional center within the broader sphere of K’aminaljuyú. If concrete archaeological evidence is found confirming this notion, it would help us to understand how during the Preclassic period sophisticated, hierarchical settlement patterns began to emerge, on which at least some part of the political scenario of the Classic period would be modeled. One related issue is focused on the relationships that Chocolá maintained with K’aminaljuyú and the many sites of the west, whose precise language we ignore. The Chocolá Project will attempt to find answers for these historic and cultural issues and for other broader and more theoretical research problems”.

Much if not all of the above is still valid regarding the nature and significance of the site, in addition to the Project’s objectives. Analyses conducted after the conclusion of the first season, including the data obtained during the second season (2004) concerning ceramics and other artifacts found, besides the architecture and settlement patterns, have led us to believe that the occupation of the site began at a much earlier date than the Late Preclassic period –probably as far back as B.C. 1200 - and that it may have lasted until the end of the Postclassic period. The construction phases, the changes in the groups controlling the city and the continuity or the absence of it in the different occupations of the site besides many other archaeological aspects of Chocolá, still remain unknown. However, we believe that significant progress has been made in a rather short time.

After the 2003 season, our ideas changed in regard to the ancient occupation of the site; this means that the occupation may have begun earlier in time and may have extended longer than we anticipated. This change was the major cause for the revision of our plans for 2004. The second specific change for the understanding of the ancient community derived from the discovery of very sophisticated water managements in two mounds located at the north of the site [Fig. 1-26a, b, c, d]. In 2004 we excavated one of these mounds in systematic units and identified 34 m of underground conduits including forks and apparent mechanisms used to open and shut the water flow (see Chapter 6). One small channel separated from the massive channel, running within a 6 x 16 m structure (see Chapter 5) in addition to salvage operations conducted more than 1 km to the south (see Chapter 10), led us to broaden our estimates of the size and scale of the system or systems. These findings reinforced the probability that we may find water management systems fit to irrigate intensive growing fields in the southern area. The discovery of sophisticated hydraulic managements, in addition to ethnohistorical evidence about the Bocacosta as an ancient center for the production of cacao, have led us to establish a new focus for our investigation: the possibility that intensive agriculture in Chocolá may be the material witness of a superior cultural and social complexity in the Mesoamerican path during the Preclassic period in the southern Maya area.

Fig. 1-26a, b, c, d. Ancient management of water resources, Mound 15.

The significance of cacao in Mesoamerica [Fig. 1-27] before the peak of the Aztec Empire and throughout colonial times has been well established.

Fig. 1.27. Cacao tree, private garden, Chocolá.

The early use of cacao is documented in ceramics of the ancient Maya area, for example in a vessel from Colhá, Belize, dated B.C. 600 - A.C. 250, which contained cacao residues (Powis et al. 2002: 97-98). At least since then, cacao grew in importance in Mesoamerica as a merchandise of common use, used as a luxury beverage for the elite and in the form of grains as currency. As described in the Mendoza Codex, the empire of the Aztecs received on a yearly basis huge amounts of cacao as tribute. Many Classic Maya ceramics show images with contexts of cacao usage, for example, in royal courts. Cacao was the focus of formal feasting; the Primary Standard Sequence, a hieroglyphic formulaic declaration repeatedly found around the rim of elite vessels, makes reference to cacao [Fig. 1-28]. Consequently, in addition to the economic value, the luxury consume of cacao helped to characterize the social hierarchy. To conclude, cacao was a part of the rituals and routines of the Maya elite. It was taken to the most sophisticated social and political world by the important exchange networks, apparently with roots or origins not only in the well-known region of the Soconusco, in Chiapas, México, but also in the Bocacosta, Guatemala –where the ancient site of Chocolá is centrally located-; cacao also must have greatly impacted the economies, the social organization, and the complexity developed in the southern Maya area.

Fig. 1-28. The Primary Standard Sequence (Kerr Archives and courtesy of Reents-Budet 1994).

The Bocacosta is located adjacent to the Soconusco, and according to ancient geography and ethnohistory, both regions have been the heart of the rich ancient production of top quality cacao (*Título de la Casa Ixquin-Nehaib, Señora del Territorio de Otzoya* 1984: 79-8, Carrasco 1982, Juarros 1936, Coe 1961: 18-19, Gage 1967, Gasco 1993, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2003, Lutz and Lovell 1990, McBryde 1945). One plausible use, given the abundance of water, is the irrigation of this product with such a high demand in Mesoamérica. The intensive, large scale production plus the exchange of cacao, appear as the logical grounds for the complex, ancient developments that took place in Chocolá. The hypothesis that these processes and events did in fact take place at Chocolá during the Middle Preclassic and Late Preclassic periods, deserved additional attention during the 2004 season (and will be a special priority in future investigations).

Our investigations in 2004 have shown that conditions for the cacao production at Suchitepéquez are outstanding: a height that ranges from 600 to 800 m above sea level[42]; a strong sun with good shadow provided by trees; huge water resources averaging 5 meters rainfalls per year, many sources and springs, many rivers with plentiful water and a rapid flow, and well-drained soils, so rich that the people from Chocolá use to say that all plants with no exception would grow in such a soil. Cortés introduced cacao in Europe by 1527, where it became popular in a very short time. In the centuries that followed, the massive growth was introduced by Spanish, French, Dutch and English colonies around the world. Since the earliest post-conquest times to the mid-XIX century, Spanish *encomenderos* from southern Guatemala created large plantations to export the product. In the XVII and XVIII centuries, the Guatemalan *fincas* from Suchitepéquez and the adjacent Soconusco exported a large percentage of the cacao worldwide. As of the XIX century, the

[42] The extension of the archaeological remains of Chocolá from 900 to 600 m above sea level supports the hypothesis that the ancient site no only played a role in the intensive growth of cacao, but also in controlling the exchange of the product. Without this role, there is no reason to explain the large size of Chocolá and its extended time of occupation.

cheaper production of cacao in South America led to the acute fall of the fortunes originated in the Guatemalan cacao plantations. By the mid-XIX century, coffee and sugar cane replaced cacao in southern Guatemala as an export crop.

Like we said, the results of the 2003 and 2004 seasons conspicuously included the finding of water management in large elite mounds built both within the site's precincts at the north of the site and in the central administrative districts. A greater understanding of such water managements, used particularly for intensive agriculture, will not only help us to understand how and why Chocolá, since the beginning of the Preclassic period, has grown and become very large and lasted for a long time creating a possibly very influential society, but it will also help us to study how the processual factors linked to water management, specialized agriculture – and particularly elite items - and monopolic exchange, led to the formation of a polity, in a comparative sense.

Modality and general conditions of the research

The primary activities of PACH during the first season consisted in surveying and systematically mapping every ancient vestige of the site, including structures, terraces and the precise location of monuments. These activities included the reconnaissance of aspects of the more recently or modernly modified landscape, for example ravines, cemeteries, waterfalls, springs, water inlets, aqueducts, and the Victorian buildings conforming the headquarters of the plantation. In 2004 additional survey and mapping were completed, although this did not represent the major part of our field work. This effort focused on areas located outside the 4 x 2 km area involved in the works carried out in 2003 (see Chapter 3). We believe, as of the informal reconnaissance, that there are very distant satellite communities still to be explored and mapped. This was confirmed after the 2004 season. It is important to conduct such reconnaissance to achieve a better understanding of how the ancient city worked and of the diachronic changes in the form of the community's growth and decrease, to outline the history of their lives in terms of their developments and evolutions as a social and political entity. Non-invasive, remote-sensed survey technology was used as a part of the mapping strategy to identify very specific and significant locations (see Chapter 4) [Fig. 1-29].

Fig. 1-29. The use of gradiometry, Chocolá, 2004.

Through gradiometry we searched for buried traits, monuments and garbage pits around the major mounds where we assumed elite districts were located at the north of the site, in the administrative precinct of the core area, and in areas south of the features and buildings probably related to intensive agriculture, workshops, and common households. In addition to the reconnaissance, mapping and remote survey, in view of the fact that the sole publication on excavations previously conducted at Chocolá was written by R. Burkitt's back in the 1920's, extensive excavations were carried out in 2004, whose results are described in the chapters that follow.

The field work and excavation season of 2004 took place during the months of June, July and August. As usually happens during this timeframe in the southern coast of Guatemala, work is accomplished during the morning hours, as after lunch at 1 or 2 pm and two or three times a week, it regularly rains. This impairs continuity in the excavation works because pits tend to flood, and besides, the water that runs from the higher parts of the mounds to the lower ones falls directly into the pits, in a way that makes it difficult to detect the natural strata of profiles, as water homogenizes the texture and color of the soils. Even with the use of the Munsell color charts and their numbered range of colors, the task is rather difficult.

Research Justification

The archaeological site of Chocolá is located there where it used to be an old coffee plantation, owned by German citizens who settled in Guatemala during the second half of the XIX century. This was a large plantation with an extension of nearly 60 *caballerías*, where the owners built their own headquarters, a hotel for visitors, a beneficiation for processing coffee, a huge workshop and houses for the senior workers. The relevance of this *finca* took the railways to the very heart of it to extract the grains and transport the sacks of coffee to the Pacific ports. All of these constructions were built in the Victorian style, in concordance with the architectural fashion of those times, with an emphasis in houses and administrative buildings of the use of wood in practical and elegant designs (see Chapter 11) [Fig. 1.30].

Fig. 1-30. Victorian architecture, Chocolá.

Today, just a few of these buildings persist, some in a very poor condition, thus, their protection is necessary for the substantial revalorization of these buildings which are still being used; this would encourage restoration to extend their useful life, while simultaneously, a particular architectural style that has been gradually disappearing from the national panorama would be protected.

Presently, this rural establishment is a cooperative society run by hundreds of small owners organized in commissions and committees, including one for the protection of green areas, and even though they are familiar with the recent history of the establishment, they ignore why Mound B excavated by Burkitt in 1924 has become the town's garbage dump, while Mound 1 ("Mound C" in Burkitt's program) serves as a center for social gatherings and sports, where football games and bullfights are watched. All other mounds show coffee plantations on top of them, although it is also apparent that with the growth of the village, modern houses were as well built on top of secondary mounds [Fig. 1-31] (see Chapter 2).

Fig. 1-31. Damage to the mounds at Chocolá (Mound 2).

Other signs of damage suffered by the archaeological patrimony are observed at the local cemetery, located on top of a plaza among several mounds, so that the surface archaeological materials originated in the lower strata, disturbed when new graves were dug, may be easily observed [Fig. 1-32].

Fig. 1-32. Chocolá's cemetery.

A particularly special phenomenon which should not be disregarded is the recent change from the Catholic to the Protestant religion by several plot owners [Fig. 1-33]. According to informants, this has led to the search of monuments that the practitioners of the new religion call "demons of evil", forbidding natives to conduct the rituals and ancestral ceremonies they used to practice there in the past.

Fig. 1-33. Catholic church with an almost discontinued use as a consequence of the proliferation of Evangelic churches.

Therefore, there is an urge to proceed with the archaeological work at the site to have its dimensions defined and to gain knowledge on its sociopolitical implications at a regional [Fig. 1-34a, b] and extra-regional level. This will allow to encourage its protection, making the local population aware of the value the site once had, and the advantages it could have in the future by combining the administration of tourism at the prehispanic place with the preservation of the Victorian-style buildings, where the functioning of the water power driven machines may still be witnessed like in a living museum, unique in Guatemala and very valuable as a window to post-colonial times in Guatemala.

Fig. 1-34a, b. Architectural samples near Chocolá (immediately west of San Antonio Suchitepéquez) from the recent cut of the mound.

Objectives

Taking into consideration the above information, the significance the site once had and still has is self-explanatory, thus, the primary goals of our work are the following, just as in the first season:

General Objectives

1. To continue obtaining as much information as possible about one of the most important sites in southern Guatemala during the Preclassic period, a time and place that archaeologists have long assumed as having contributed critical and significant stimuli for the development of future civilizations;
2. To continue using different methods to define the set of archaeological manifestations at the central core, the important peripheral structures, the occupational timeframe, the main constructive phases, and to obtain data referred to the economic, political and social organization of the site;
3. To continue in the search of relationships with major sites at the west including non-Maya speaking centers, which may have been related to K'aminaljuyú by using Chocolá as an intermediary center as a part of an emerging system of interaction of the "center-periphery-center" type.

Specific Objectives

1. To continue with the full and thorough mapping of the site to define its extension and territorial composition.
2. To continue with the identification of traits and features defining its local character and foreign relationships, both with K'aminaljuyú at the Altiplano and with Tak'alik Ab'aj at the Bocacosta, or with any other site from the coastal area.

3. To continue defining the role of Chocolá as a polity throughout its history:
    a. like a possible port of exchange.
    b. like a secondary redistribution center under the administration of K'aminaljuyú;
    c. like a secondary center, with a greater dependency from Tak'alik' Ab'aj;
    d. like a neutral center with an independent political category,
    e. like an hydraulic center involved in the intensive growth of cacao with a possible commerce monopoly along the southern area.

Theoretical and Methodological Approach

Chocolá extends along the elevated southwestern piedmont of Guatemala, within the Suchitepéquez department. The piedmont at the west begins there where the volcanoes of the central Altiplano descend to the large "boiler" created by Lake Atitlán, and extends along hundreds of kilometers towards the west to introduce itself in the area of Chiapas. Chocolá is located almost equidistantly from the important sites with Preclassic and Protoclassic hieroglyphic writing of El Baúl to the east and Tak'alik Ab'aj to the west. This site is also more or less at an equal distance between K'aminaljuyú and Izapa, [Fig. 1-35], the great probably non-Maya and very interesting site, as partly, the Popol Vuh's ideology may have developed there, according to the depictions found in some of its many monuments.

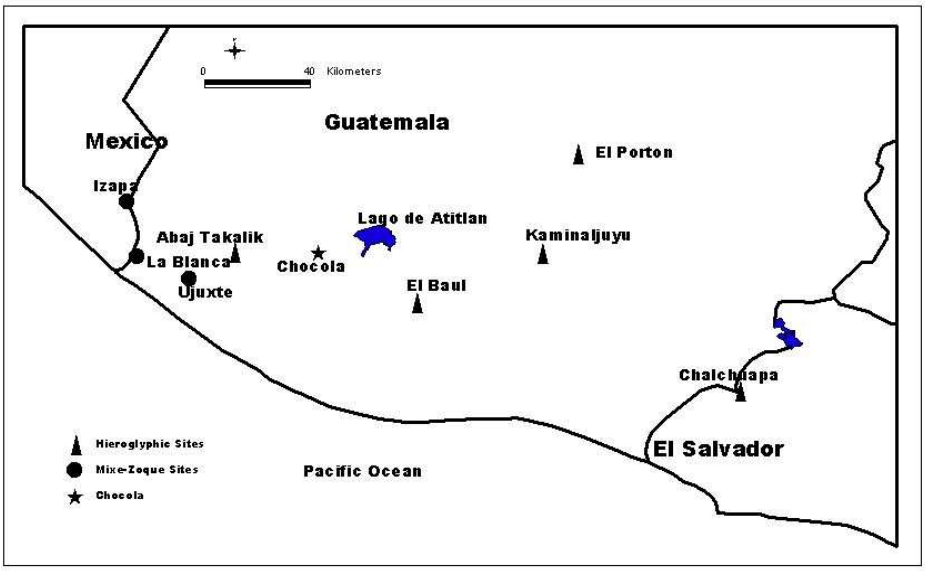

Fig. 1-35. Map showing the equidistant distances between significant sites, including Chocolá, during the Preclassic period.

Three sites –K'aminaljuyú, Izapa and Chocolá-, as also other major Preclassic centers from the south, produced that which art historians have described as an extraordinary sophisticated and refined sculptural art in the frame of the entire Mesoamerican context (Miles 1965:255, Parsons 1986:50) while at least one part of those sculptures exhibit early hieroglyphic texts. We refer specifically to the "Miraflores" sculptural style, which represents the apparent moment of the highest Preclassic developments at K'aminaljuyú, also present at Chocolá in sculpted Monument No. 1, maybe suggesting a link between the geographic heart of the area

of production of refined Preclassic sculpture, and what perhaps should be called a "precocious" writing.

As suggested, in addition to the significant implications derived from works such as Monument 1 at Chocolá, which indicates different bonds with centers such as K'aminaljuyú, it seems plausible to consider of significance the surprising equidistant localization of Chocolá between K'aminaljuyú to the east, and Izapa to the west. There is strong artistic evidence of some relationship during the Late Preclassic period between the two latter centers, which leads us to speculate in a more precise manner about the seminal and dynamic developments that occurred prior to the birth of the Classic Maya civilization.

Moreover, and as mentioned earlier in this text, Chocolá extends along a line of sites with hieroglyphic monuments, including Tak'alik' Ab'aj, El Baúl, K'aminaljuyú, and Chalchuapa [Fig. 1-36], so we anticipate the presence of other sculpted monuments that will be revealed, besides Altar 1 which was discovered almost one century ago. Regarding the Preclassic K'aminaljuyú, it has been argued that writing represents two languages, Mayan and Mixe-Zoque (Kaplan n/d.: 343-351). Others state that the language of glyphs from K'aminaljuyú may be identified as Cholan. These questions about the development of writing may be clarified with new evidence obtained at Chocolá.

Important Middle and Late Preclassic Centers in the Southern Maya Zone

Fig. 1-36. The southern Maya area.

Besides the "cultural" issues, such as hieroglyphic writing and sculptural production, the socio-economical processes at Chocolá must be made evident through archaeology. The great and particular drive which assumedly led the way to the irruption of K'aminaljuyú in the great southern area was the control of the large

obsidian sources of El Chayal. If Chocolá was a secondary site within the great major sphere of K'aminaljuyú, as suggested, evidences should be obtained regarding the economic support derived from K'aminaljuyú's hegemony, just as it is observed in Chocolá regarding the obsidian in crafts workshops, as well as the evidence of regional and extra regional distribution of obsidian and other goods and products. Moreover, full and complete ideological and economical evidence should be found related to the "primary-secondary" or "core-periphery" sociopolitical system.

Relevance and problems of the investigation in the southern Guatemala area

Mayanist in the past have considered that the innovative answers to social challenges were developed in the area of southern Guatemala and the Altiplano during the Preclassic period, and that said areas provided significant stimuli to the Maya culture of the Classic period (Demarest 1986, 1988:340, Kidder 1934- 35-12, Morley, Brainerd and Sharer 1983: 63-77, Parsons 1986: 95-96, Riese 1988:67, Sharer 1994: 105-108, Sharer and Sedat 1987: 452-454). However, this approach has raised controversies in recent years in different articles that deal with the beginning of populations in the lowlands, and the emergence of social complexity in the region (Hansen 1994a, 1994b, Clark, Hansen and Pérez, n/d), while it was suggested that political and religious ideology was locally developed, although with foreign loans from the Olmec area.

Another arguable aspect has been the impossibility to define the nature of the Classic Maya state, which up to this day should be described like some sort of debate on whether the picture closest to reality is a model of a "paritary-state" or of a "core-periphery" state (Pyburn 1997:157). According to recent statements, the formation of a polity requires hierarchical settlement patterns (ibid.); moreover, in attempting to envision the state as a system of representation, "it is necessary to adopt a methodology that includes some kind of approach to a settlement pattern" (Wilson 1997:231). Therefore, one significant matter that still encourages research is how the emerging polities interacted with, and/or controlled, the minor states –a pattern accepted nowadays by most Mayanist researchers for the extremely extended Maya polities of the Classic period, even if the pattern of "swamp state" still seems to be referring to the relationships between many other Maya centers. The political systems with a large, dominant central site interrelated to secondary, "border" sites, are described in the very rich archaeological literature like "central" or "nuclear" and "peripheral", while Algaze (1993) in particular, describes the Mesopotamian hegemonies that reached extremely distant regions under a direct political control. Therefore, it is demonstrable that the investigation in the area of southern Guatemala and Mexico may be benefited and may offer richer evidence regarding such systems and processes by compared application.

Both in antiquity and more recently, researchers have shown that the southern Preclassic cultures had an extended permanency and were leading centers in the early Mesoamerican chronology. Traditionally, for instance, scholars have considered that the southern area had witnessed the birth of hieroglyphic writing, as well as the cult to stelae. It is known that broadly, there was an emergence of population centers that exhibited many of the traits usually considered as typical of the early polities, such as a relatively large size and monumental architecture and sculpture. Tak'alik' Ab'aj was creating monumental sculptures since ca. B.C. 1000 (Graham 1977, 1979), K'aminaljuyú, as well as Izapa, since ca. B.C. 700 (Parsons

1986, Ekholm 1969, Lowe, Lee and Martínez 1982), while Bilbao and Monte Alto since ca. B.C. 500 (Parsons 1967-1969, Parsons 1986).

In the early dates mentioned above, monumental, large scale architecture was being built at La Blanca (Love 1990, 1991). And this also happened at the even larger Preclassic and amazing site of Ujuxte, on the west coast, where a system of grids with formal “avenues” was uncovered (Love 1999). Even farther away, in the South Pacific of the Mexican coast, significant developments pointing to a complex culture occurred, as a part of the cultural matrix wherefrom at least some of the stimuli and history of the civilizations of southern area (Clark 1991) seem to have emerged; the investigation at important sites from southern Chiapas, ecologically a part of the Chocolá environment, is completing our knowledge of the Early and Middle Preclassic periods (Lowe 1977: 230, 1995; cfr. Clark, Hansen and Pérez, n/d: 17-18). Those sites, probably of Zoque speakers, show connections with the Maya culture both as beneficiaries and donors.

In spite of the numerous and useful projects that have been completed in the past decades, conducted in an attempt to approach such assertions and evidences, our knowledge of the southern Preclassic area still remains a vague amalgam of non-integrated but intriguing facts and their synthetic reality, a mystery. Probably, within the sphere of K’aminaljuyú in Preclassic times there was a constellation of significant sites, be them independent or included within its aegis, such as El Portón at the north, Chalhuapa at the south, and the largest and almost fully unstudied site of Chocolá, at west. El Portón and Chalchuapa, as well as K’aminaljuyú, have a good number of early hieroglyphic texts from the beginning of the Late Preclassic period, and consequently, prior to the first dates of the Classic Long Count; therefore, it is highly probable that Chocolá may also have sculpted monuments of an identical type and dates. As mentioned earlier, Chocolá has not been studied so far, with the exception of a few and inefficient efforts made several decades ago that have yielded more questions than answers.

Perhaps, in the archaeological empirical investigation of the southern area, the economic processes were somehow underemphasized, while clearly, such processes must have been extremely important, given our knowledge of the trade routes and the dynamic connections with the highlands, presumably functioning as a nexus with the cultures of the lowlands and with the coastal cultures of the west and south. Moreover, materialistic paradigms may emerge offering the most promising possibilities to understand the seemingly extraordinary significance of the southern area with respect to the development of some of the key traits of the Mesoamerican culture from the highlands. Therefore, the problems addressed to achieve a better understanding cannot be healed regarding the historico-artistical and ideological bonds between the southern centers, which are apparently quite different in the cases of Chocolá and K’aminaljuyú; an investigation is urgent not only to fill in the “voids” or historico-cultural blanks, but also to search for concrete evidences of manifestations of crucial economic processes, including evidence of craft manufactures and trade within the varied and heterogeneous southern Preclassic. Perhaps, the specific, most important question in this investigation, as of the evidence obtained from the southern area, would be: if its true that complex, significant societies were more or less pristinely emerging in the south, how, for example, was a state system manifested?, were they perhaps a network of primary-secondary linked center, or whey they connected through “peripheral cores”?

Conclusion: Research Program of the Chocolá Archaeological Project

The framework of the PACH research is oriented towards the search of the following: 1) early or seminal urban planning; 2) cores and peripheries within a "world-systems" perspective; 3) seminal forms of Maya ideology, art, govern, and hieroglyphic writing; 4) ethnic interaction in the process of culture production and the agency-structure praxis; 5) economic early or seminal appropriations and inventions of a production infrastructure, including intensive agriculture and monopolism and exchange of significant consumer goods. All of these theories and considerations have guided and will continue to guide our studies for a long time, to find explanations concerning the many mysteries of the Mayas of the southern area in the Preclassic period.

As noted, this site has sufficient physical evidences to show its particular significance in the region. However, we know absolutely nothing about what is hidden in the subsoil as a secret of such a glorious past, as no researcher has ever excavated the place in a serious and systematic way. To check some of the postulates brought forth by the heads of the project, a search for funds was initiated to carry out this project, which should begin with the survey and mapping of the place, to further approach the excavation works. That is why during the 2003 and 2004 seasons special emphasis was placed on mapping, to become timely acquainted with the topography, the geographical features, the presence of mounds and any other trait that may have influenced human settlements several millennia ago.

During over one year contacts were established with the authorities of ECA Chocolá so that they would learn about our intentions to conduct a study. They were explained the importance of archaeology to learn about the past of the modern settlers and the advantages the project could bring about for the present population in such different fronts as educational support, labor sources, and support for tourism [Fig. 1-37a-i].

In view of the fact that the ancient Chocolá is located equidistantly between K'aminaljuyú and Izapa, as well as very close to the sites of Tak'alik' Ab'aj, La Blanca and Ujuxte, we are certain that Chocolá also had a political bond with the greater Maya center of the Altiplano, K'aminaljuyú, and therefore it is very feasible that it had taken part in the development and the dynamics of the southern area of Guatemala during the Preclassic and Classic periods.

In the past decades, several archaeologists have outlined the close relationship that existed during the Late Preclassic period between sites from the Altiplano and others from the western coast of Guatemala (Schieber and Orrego 2002; Hatch 2003), based on isolated data obtained from sculptures, ceramics, lithics and architecture (Valdés et al. 2003). For a better understanding of such contacts, we believed that new corridors or mountain gorges were to be found, which had served as routes for communicating both ecosystems; thus, topographic and anthropological observations were initiated in the region, consulting maps and individuals, all of which led to our learning about the existence of an ancient commercial route that began at Chocolá and ended at Nahualá (Sololá), a village widely known for its rich agriculture and trade. This route also forks towards Cantel (Quetzaltenango) and towards Lake Atitlán.

This has led us to presume that the study of Chocolá may be more complex than originally thought, and that its location in one of the ends of the commercial route that connected the Bocacosta with the Altiplano responds to an intentional planning.

Therefore, we proceeded to add the major objectives of the first season. In 2003, our motifs were the following:

1. To gain knowledge on the location of the site, the distribution of architectural traits, and the exploitation of its natural resources, as of a wide survey program that would lead us to the preparation of a new map of the archaeological zone;
2. To conduct studies at a local level, to define the role played by Chocolá as a polity throughout its history, like:
3. a possible port of exchange;
4. a redistribution center, administrated during the Late Preclassic by K'aminaljuyú:
5. a secondary center with a greater dependency from Tak'alik' Ab'aj;
6. a center with a political category of its own;
7. To conduct studies at a regional level, identifying new centers and defining the scopes of Chocolá within the regional sociopolitical dynamics. This will allow to understand the type of relationship that existed between Chocolá and other leading centers such as K'aminaljuyú, Tak'alik' Ab'aj and probably as well, Palo Gordo and El Baúl.

In 2004 other focuses were added, guided by specific and highly significant findings made in 2003 concerning the presence of a sophisticated water management system and the possibility to finally understand Chocolá's rise to a high social and cultural level through the ancient exploitation of the agricultural wealth in the area, and specifically, through the intensive growth of cacao, a very significant product throughout Mesoamérica. Therefore, this season we sought for results achieved through the intensive excavation of Cartesian units by following the below axis:

1. To investigate the specific possibility of the special utilization of the overabundance of water in Chocolá in the form of a sophisticated water management to water the fields, and the intensive grown of cacao. This activity could explain the rise to social and cultural complexity of the ancient city;
2. To investigate presumably administrative structures.
3.

In short, focusing on such subjects during the second season, a number of dramatic discoveries led us to adapt and modify our proposed plans, while the findings, however, gave us the opportunity to make progress in the field of hydraulic and agricultural investigations, offering us as well new ideas on the ancient city that we had not anticipated.

Fig. 1-37a. One of the figurines recovered by PACH.

Fig. 1-37b. Offering, southern area.

Fig. 1-37c. Vessels of the offering, southern area.

Fig. 1-37d. Tripod vase, Mound 15, northern area.

Fig. 1-37e. Large bowl, Structure 15-1, northern area.

Fig. 1-37f. Ceramics, private collection, Chocolá.

Fig. 1-37g. Early Preclassic sherds.

Fig. 1-37h. Middle Preclassic sherds.

Fig. 1-37i. Late Classic sherds.