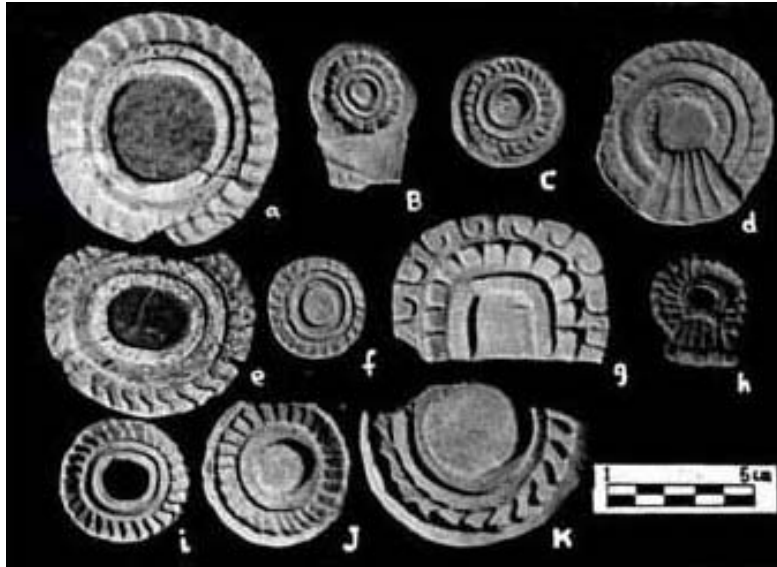


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Censer Symbolism and the State Polity in Teotihuacán



Research Year: 1998

Culture: Teotihuacán

Chronology: Late Pre-Classic to Late Classic

Location: Highland México

Site: Teotihuacán

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Bibliography

[Data Base for Theater-type Censers Found in Teotihuacán and Abroad #1](#)

"Adornos" and molds for censers from the "North Palace" in the Ciudadela,
[Teotihuacán Archaeological Project 1980-82, INAH](#)

"Adornos" and molds for censers from Compound "Group 5" of the Sector
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"Adornos" and molds for censers from surface collection in Teotihuacán,
Teotihuacán Mapping Project

"Adornos" and molds for censers from the Project of the Feathered Serpent
Pyramid in 1988-89,

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Preliminary Comments

Sources Cited

Data Base for Theater-type Censers Found in Teotihuacán and Abroad #1

In order to compare the materials from the workshop, information on censers from wider contexts was obtained from museums, storage rooms of various institutions, and private collections in México and Guatemala. Along with them, pieces obtained by four projects at Teotihuacán were included in this second volume. They are from the INAH's Teotihuacán Archaeological Project 1980-82 (TAP80-82), INAH's Scholarship Program formed in Teotihuacán in the early 1990s, the Teotihuacán Mapping Project of Rochester University which took place in the 1960s and '70s and whose materials have been stored in the Archaeological Research Center in San Juan Teotihuacán, and from the Project of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid in 1988-89, a joint project of Arizona State University and INAH.

Each project used a different recording system, and the excavation contexts vary from one to the other. In addition, I could not obtain sufficient chronological information in some cases to compare iconographic characteristics with those of other sets; the materials, therefore, may correspond to different ceramic phases. However, each set apparently reflects locational variability in censer production, from where the samples originated. In some cases quantitative data were available, while in others the information was insufficient, and the time to examine it was very limited; therefore, quantitative comparison is difficult at this stage. Only iconographic varieties will be taken into account for the analysis and interpretation.

The TAP80-82, directed by the Archaeologist Rubén Cabrera Castro, recovered, in addition to the workshop data, a large amount of "adornos" and molds for censer production from the "North Palace" in the Ciudadela that was excavated by Anna Maria Jarquín, and Enrique Martínez (1982) of INAH. The exact locations of the discoveries are unknown; however many of them evidently were associated with a burial found in the southern section of the Transversal Platform of the "North Palace," according to a plan published from the project (Cabrera, *et al.*, 1982:117). Many of the "adornos" are very similar to those from the workshop as shown in the volume; some of them were identical in terms of the motifs, the size, the clay used, and the applied techniques. Some pieces could have been manufactured with molds found in the workshop.

The Scholarship Program excavated Compound "Group 5" of the Sector N5W1 (Millon *et al.*, 1973) under the coordination of the Archaeologist Eduardo Matos Moctezuma of INAH. Relevant pieces for the censer study were kindly shown to me by Dr. Kim Jilote, who excavated at the site and carried out the figurine analysis with the materials from the excavations. "Adornos" were found as fill materials without clear association with specific structures. Related stratigraphic or chronological information is not available for comparison; however the iconographic variety in the collection clearly indicates a strong analogy between two sets of the "adornos." On the other hand, the variety of the "adornos" from the workshop was wider than those found in "Group 5," and the former were also quantitatively much greater than the later.

The Teotihuacán Mapping Project, directed by René Millon, also recovered a small amount of censer bodies and "adornos." Since they were mostly collected by surface survey, many of the materials were fragmented and dispersed widely in various places of the city. As neither precise nor abundant information on their iconography or chronology is available, the comparison with the workshop materials is difficult.

The excavations at the Feathered Serpent Pyramid were carried out extensively around and in the pyramid in 1988-89, and found a mass-sacrificial burial complex (Cabrera, Sugiyama, and Cowgill, 1991). The excavation contexts indicate that more than 200 people were sacrificed and buried in dedication to the erection of the pyramid around 200 A.D. Most of the censer fragments were found on the posterior east side of the monument. Although the precise temporal assignment of the "adornos" is difficult, as most of them were found on the upper floors or in the fill above them. The iconographic similarity with the workshop materials is self-evident. The unusually large amount of "adornos" and its close location to the workshop also suggest that censer production was associated directly with the Feathered Serpent Pyramid; as discussed later, the production may also have had to do with the military symbolism of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid.

A small amount of clay appliqué, similar to "adornos" for censers, was discovered in the pyramid fill and inside the looters' tunnel, which was excavated after the 4th century (Sugiyama, 1998). None of them have been identified as parts of typical theater-type censers, although a few pieces, too small to be precisely identified, still could have been part of them. Because fragments of the body or chimney were included in the pyramid nucleus, it can be concluded that the censers themselves, probably in simple form without "adornos," were used by the time of the pyramid erection. The data indicate that the production of the theater-type censers with strong militaristic connotations began most likely with the erection of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid.

Apart from these censers found in Teotihuacán, Teotihuacán-type censers stored in the Popol Vuh Museum, National Museum of Ethnology, and private collections in Guatemala City were studied.

"Adornos" and molds for censers from the "North Palace" in the Ciudadela.

Teotihuacán Archaeological Project 1980-82, INAH.



Figure PN 14. Ciudadela North Palace. Placa lateral con puntas y una mariposa pigmento amarillo (caja 1).



Figure PN 14-1. Ciudadela North Palace. Placa lateral con puntas y una mariposa pigmento amarillo (caja 1).



Figure PN 14-2. Ciudadela North Palace. Borde de bracero, con aplicación, rostro de ave con penacho. (caja 2) 14253 catalogo.



Figure PN 14-3. Ciudadela North Palace. Borde de bracero, con aplicación, rostro de ave con penacho. (caja 2) 14253 catalogo.

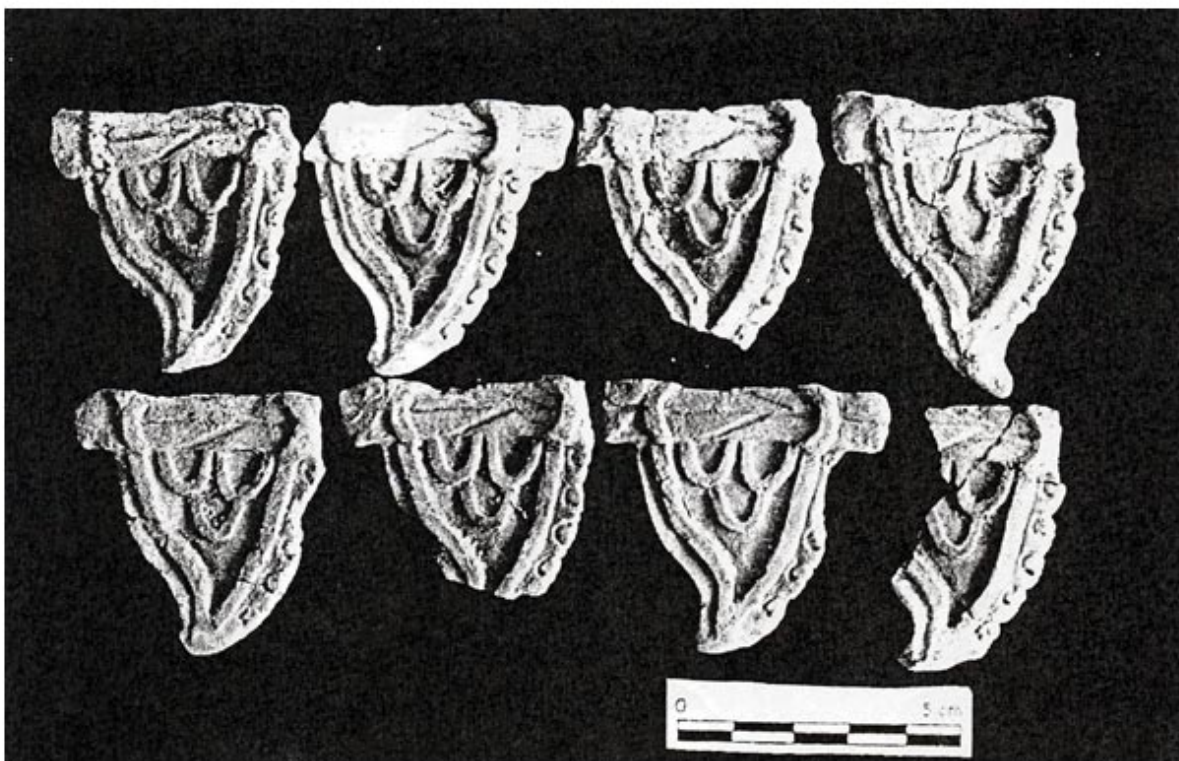


Figure PN 14-4. Ciudadela North Palace. Complejo Tlaloc de tres montañas con pigmento amarillo (caja 3).

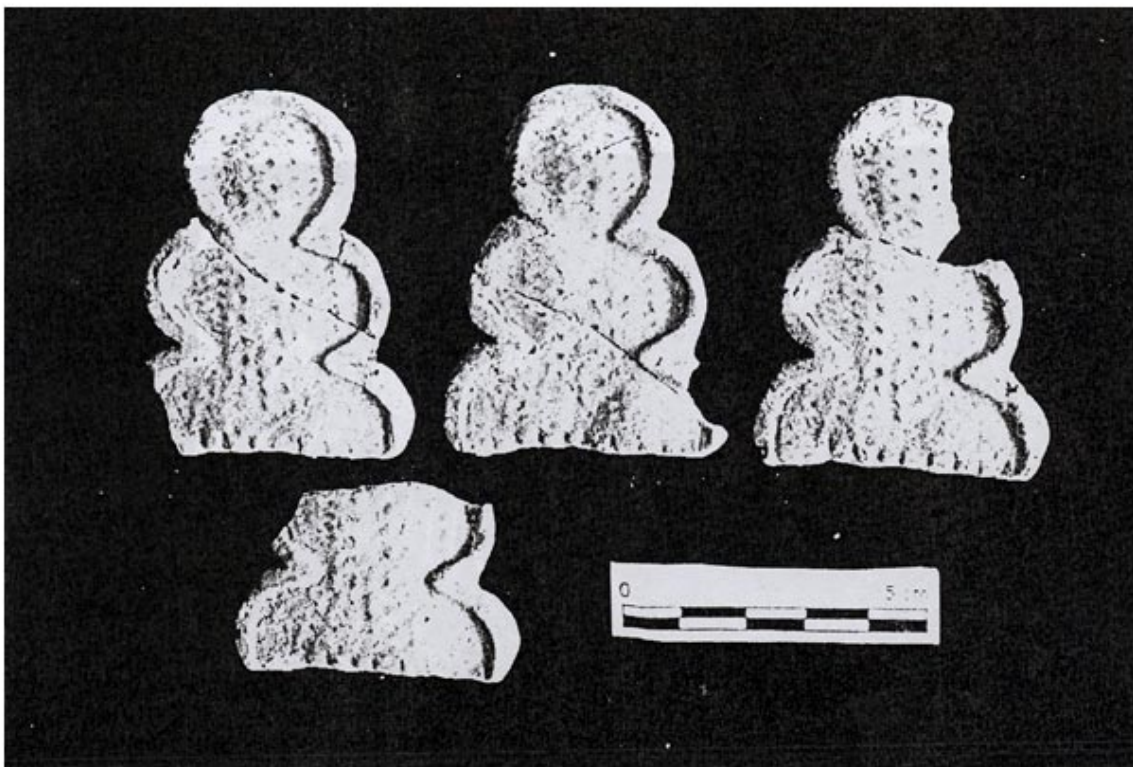


Figure PN 14-5. Ciudadela North Palace. Montañitas con pigmento rojo (poco) 14349 catalogo (caja 3).



Figure PN 14-6. Ciudadela North Palace. Tocado, plumas (2) con pigmento amarillo (caja 3).

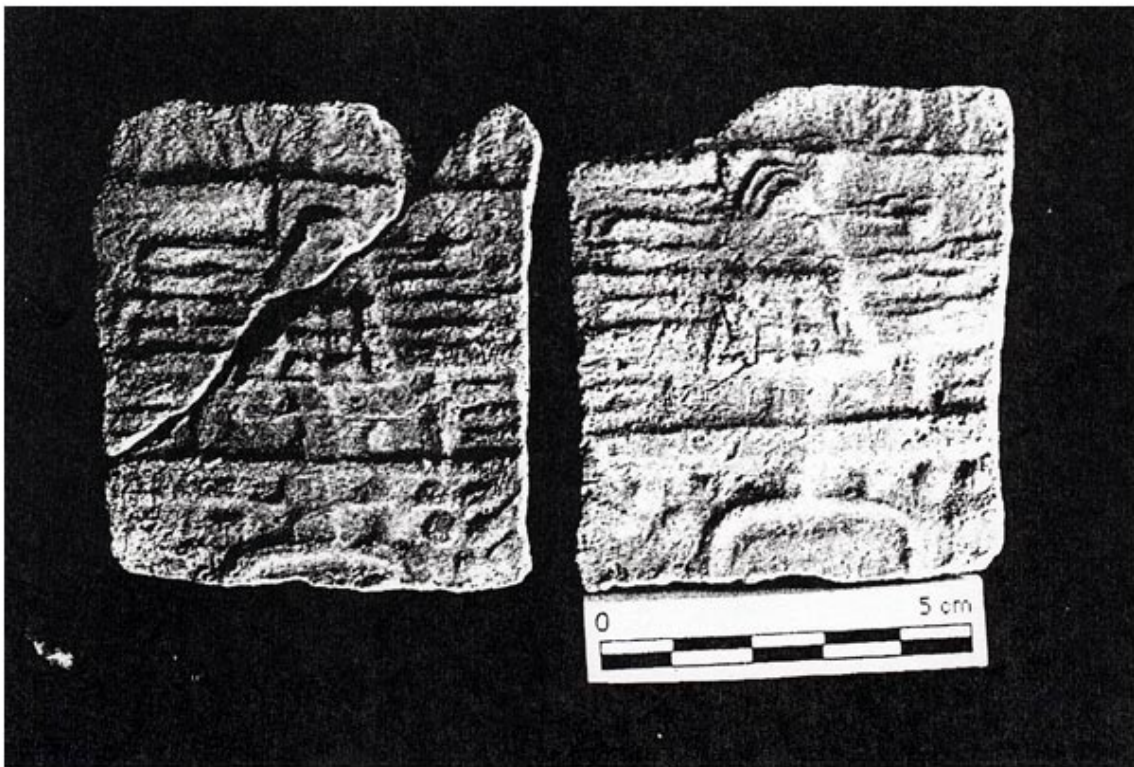


Figure PN 14-7. Ciudadela North Palace. 2 mantas sin pigmentos (caja 4).

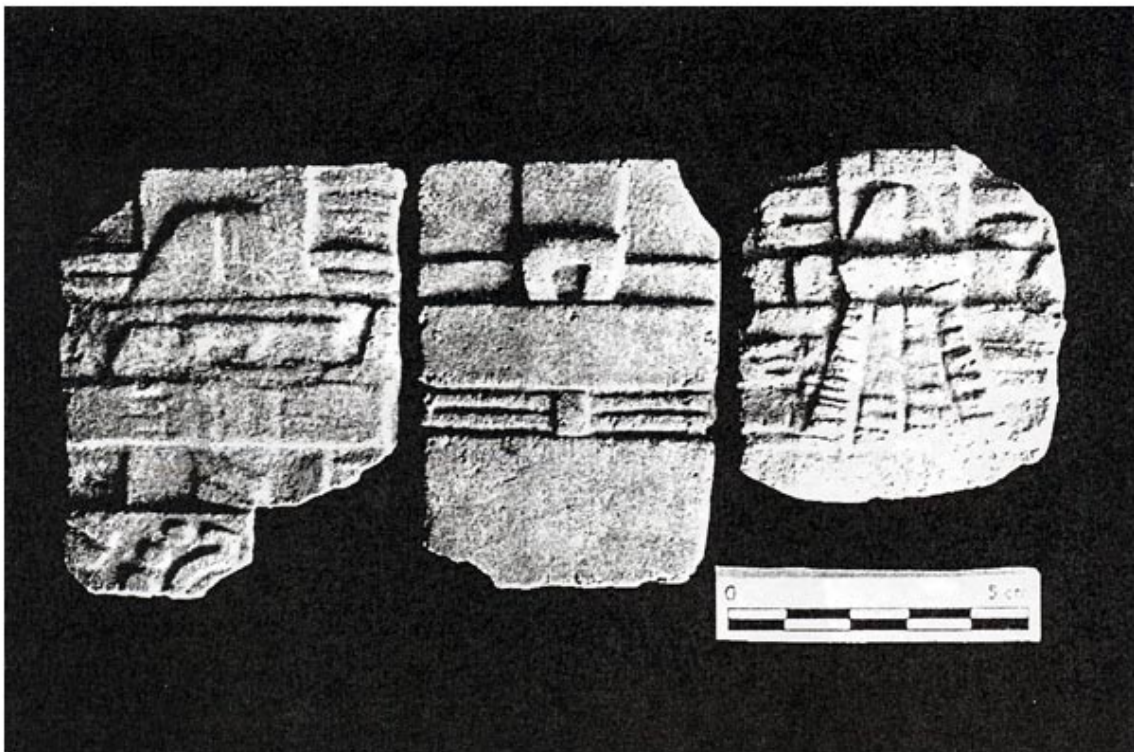


Figure PN 14-8. Ciudadela North Palace. 3 mantas, dos presentan pigmento amarillo (caja 4).

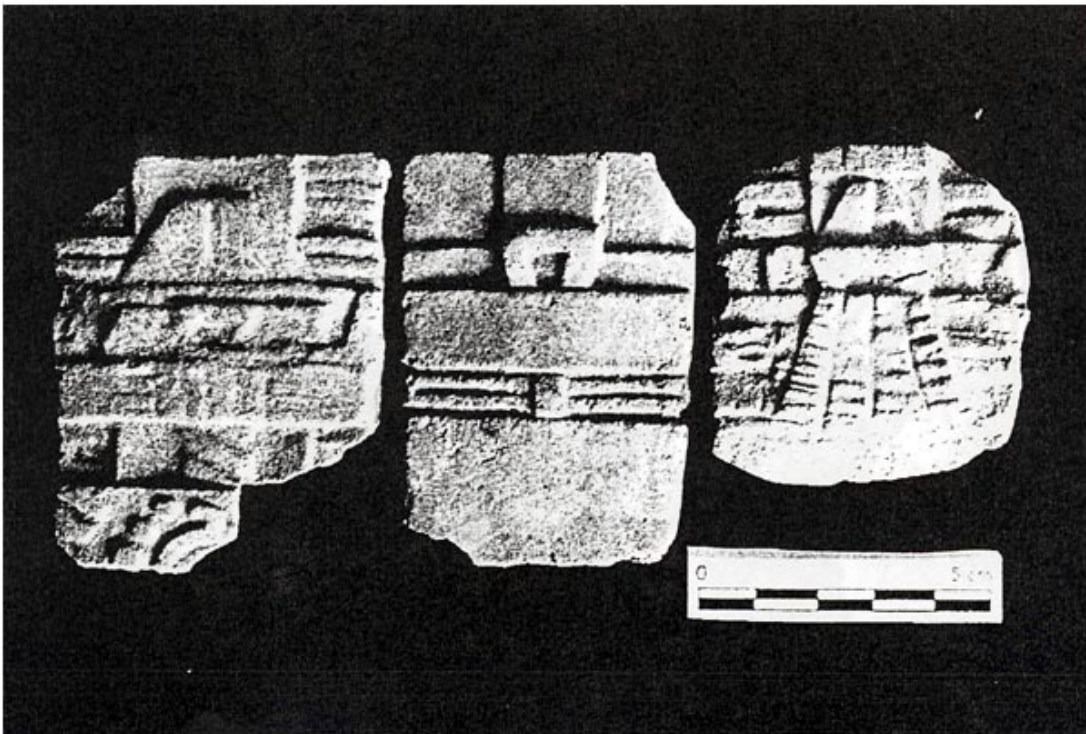


Figure PN 14-9. Ciudadela North Palace. 3 mantas, dos presentan pigmento amarillo (caja 4).



Figure PN 14-10. Ciudadela North Palace. Conchas poco pigmento blanco y rojo (caja 5).



Figure PN 14-11. Ciudadela North Palace. Conchas poco pigmento blanco y rojo (caja 5).



Figure PN 14-12. Ciudadela North Palace. 5 plantas, las dos primeras con pigmento rojo (caja 5).

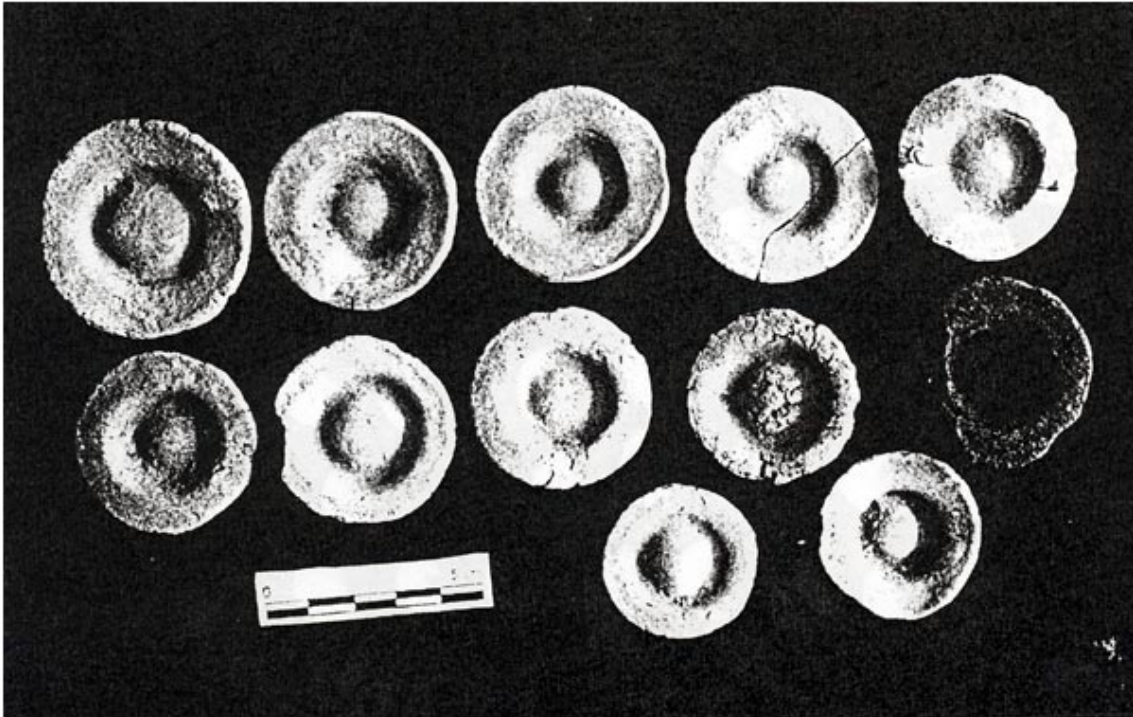


Figure PN 14-13. Ciudadela North Palace. 12 orejas sin pigmento (caja 6).

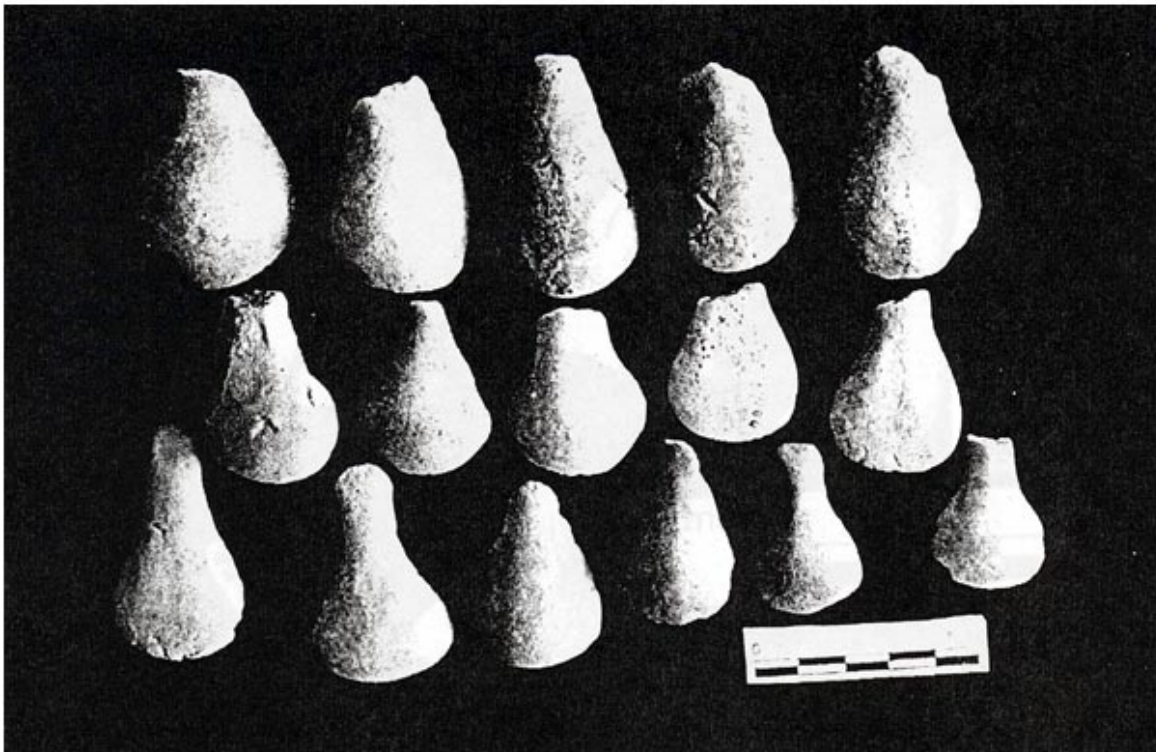


Figure PN 14-14. Ciudadela North Palace. 16 Gotas sin pigmento (caja 7).

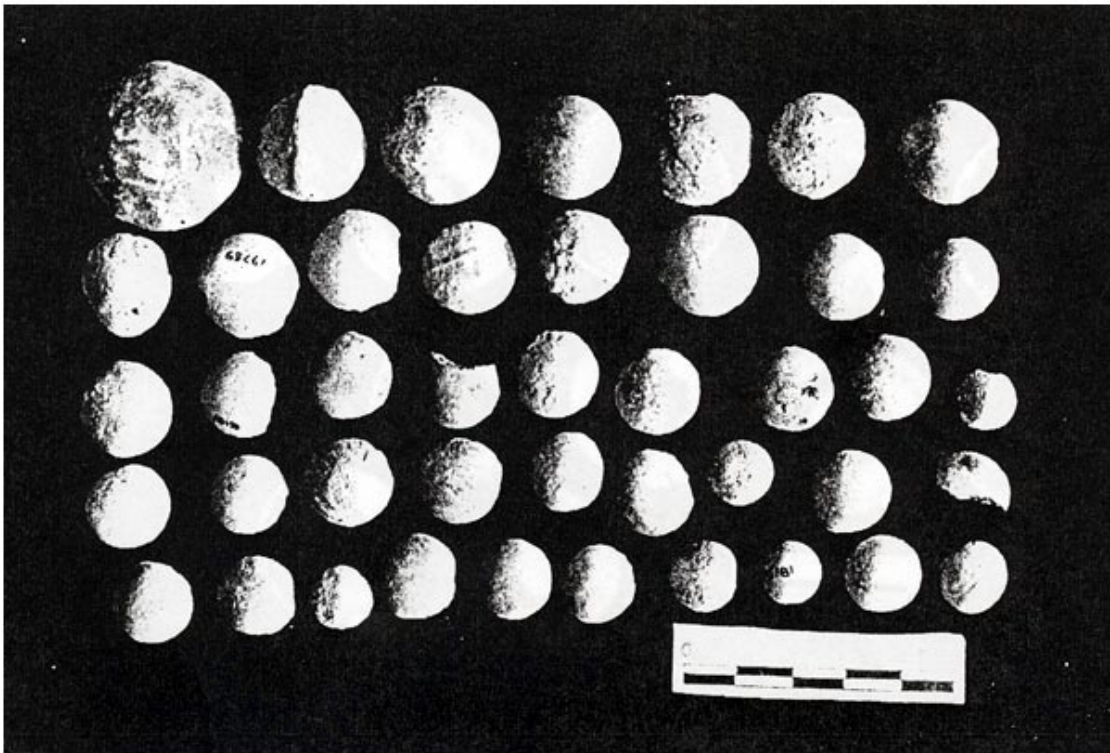


Figure PN 14-15. Ciudadela North Palace. Botones sin pigmentos (caja 8).

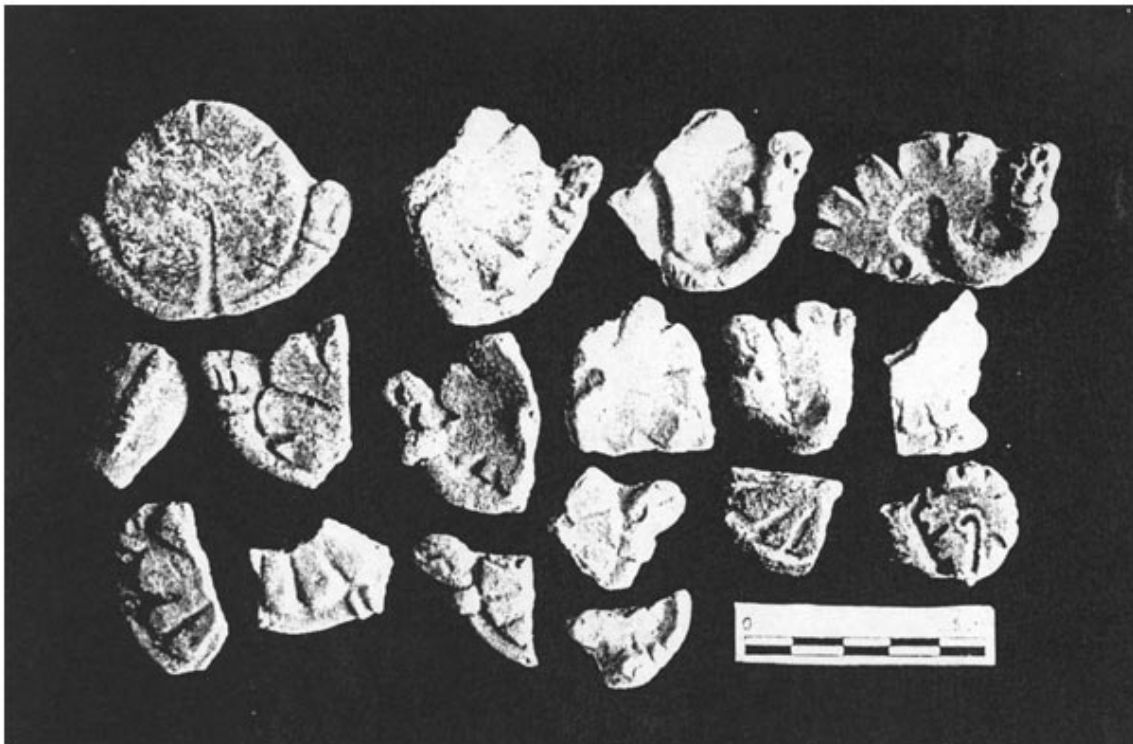


Figure PN 14-16. Ciudadela North Palace. Lirio Acuático, algunos con pigmento amarillo y rojo (caja 9).



Figure PN 14-17. Ciudadela North Palace. Alas de mariposa con pigmentos rojo, verde, amarillo, blanco (caja 10).



Figure PN 14-18. Ciudadela North Palace. 2 Plumas de tocado, poco pigmento rojo (caja 10).



Figure PN 14-19. Ciudadela North Palace. 2 Plumas de tocado, poco pigmento rojo (caja 10).



Figure PN 14-20. Ciudadela North Palace. Tocado con pigmento rojo y blanco (caja 10).

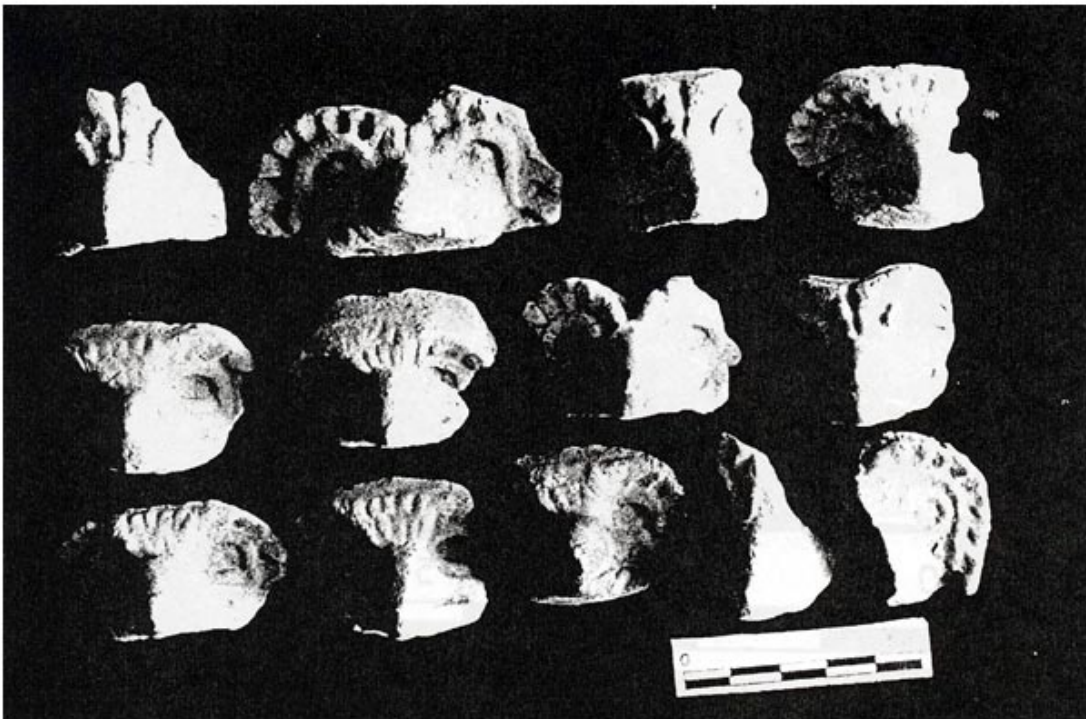


Figure PN 14-21. Ciudadela North Palace. 13 Cabezas de ave, algunas con pigmento rojo y amarillo en el pico y ojos (caja 11).

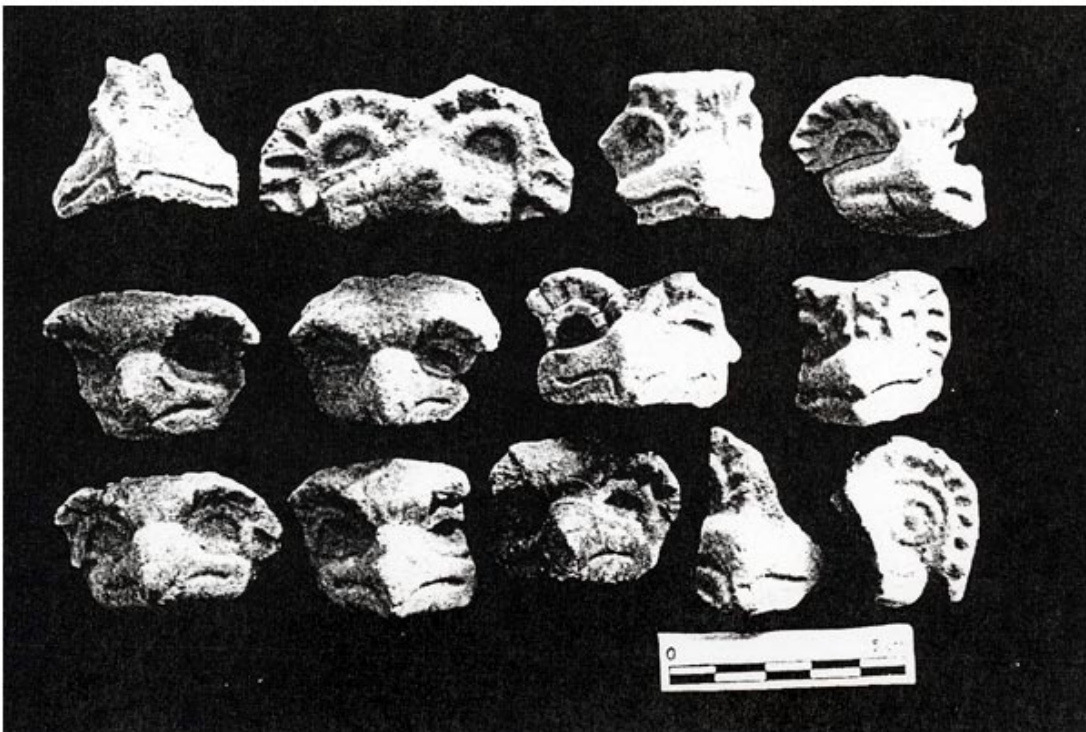


Figure PN 14-22. Ciudadela North Palace. 13 Cabezas de ave, algunas con pigmento rojo y amarillo en el pico y ojos (caja 11).

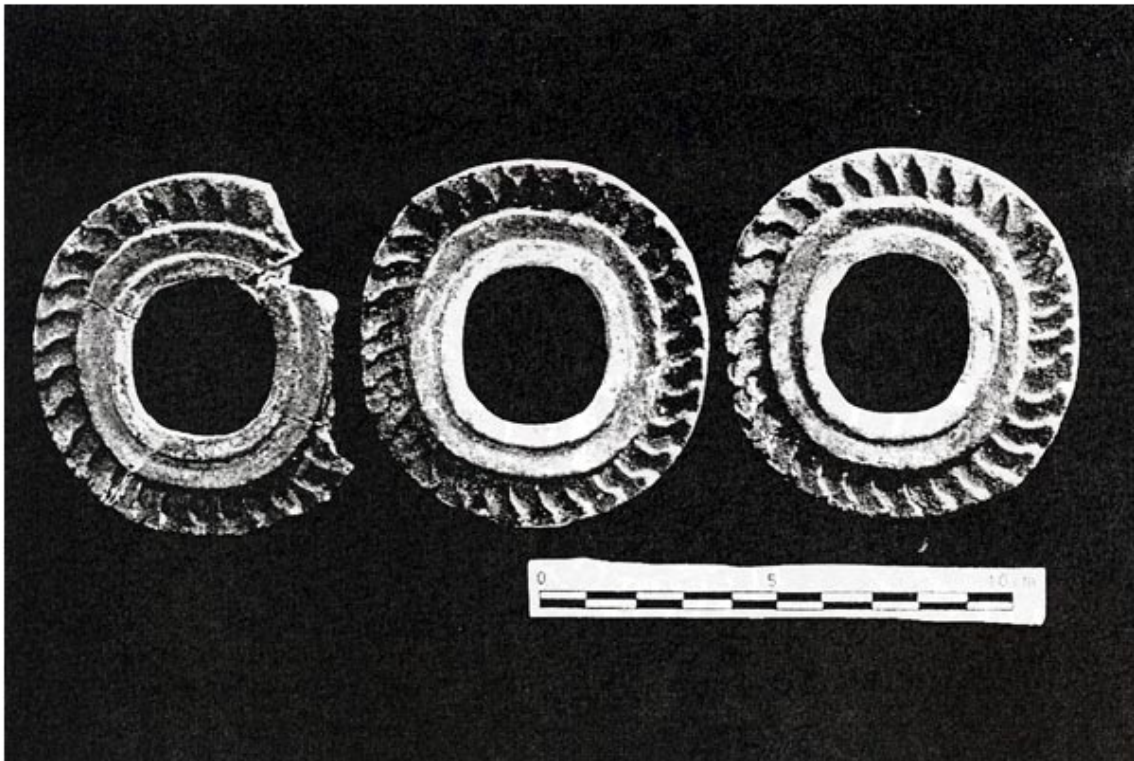


Figure PN 14-23. Ciudadela North Palace. 3 Objeto circular, borde rojo, emplumado plumas verdes (caja 12).

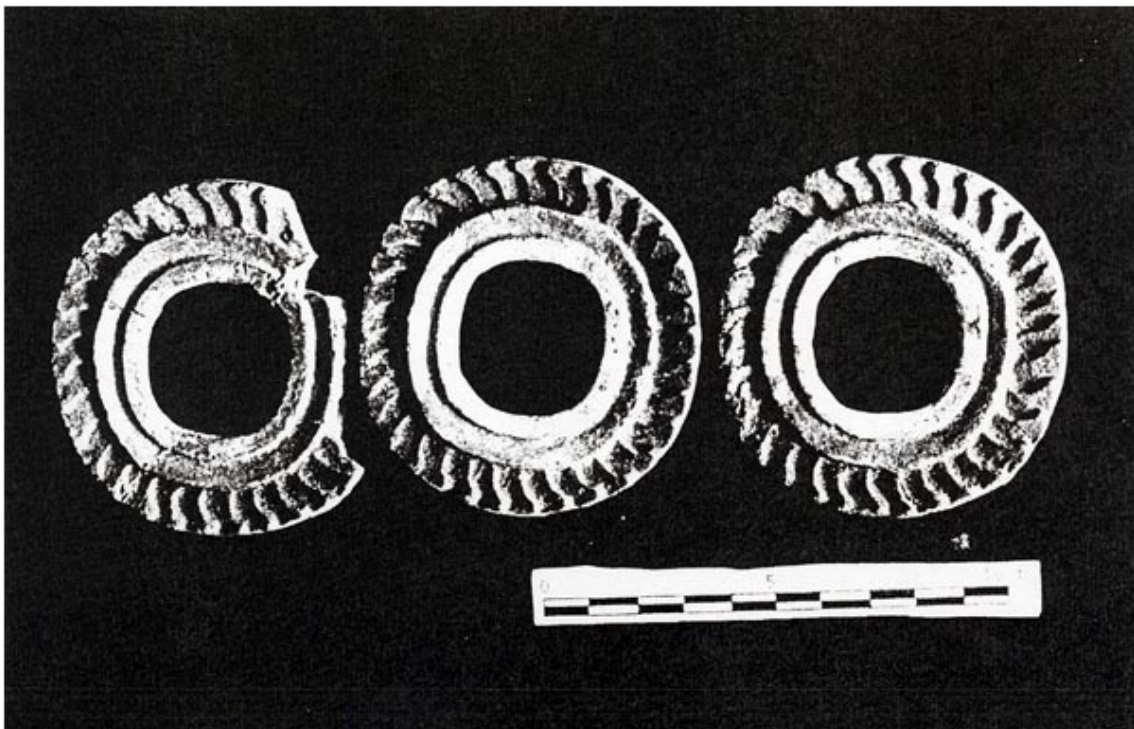


Figure PN 14-24. Ciudadela North Palace. 3 Objeto circular, borde rojo, emplumado plumas verdes (caja 12).

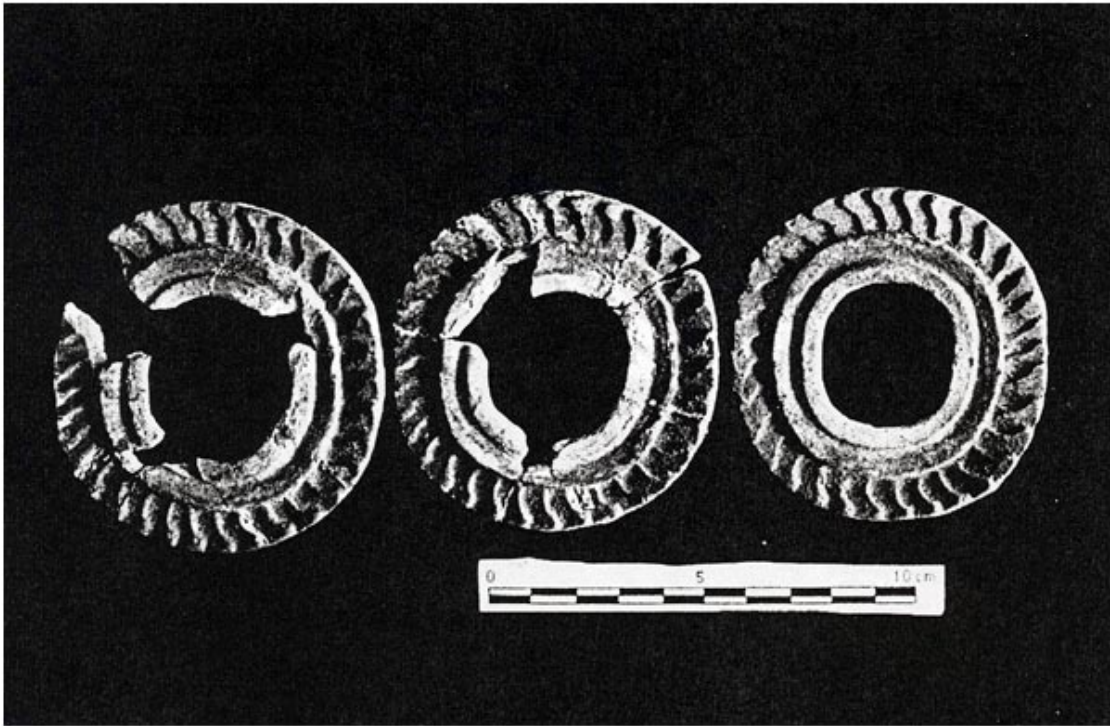


Figure PN 14-25. Ciudadela North Palace. Objeto circulares, borde rojos emplumados, plumas verdes (caja 13).



Figure PN 14-26. Ciudadela North Palace. 2 Mariposas (placas) con pigmento amarillo del mismo molde (caja 14).



Figure PN 14-27. Ciudadela North Palace. 2 Placas de mariposa (caja 14).

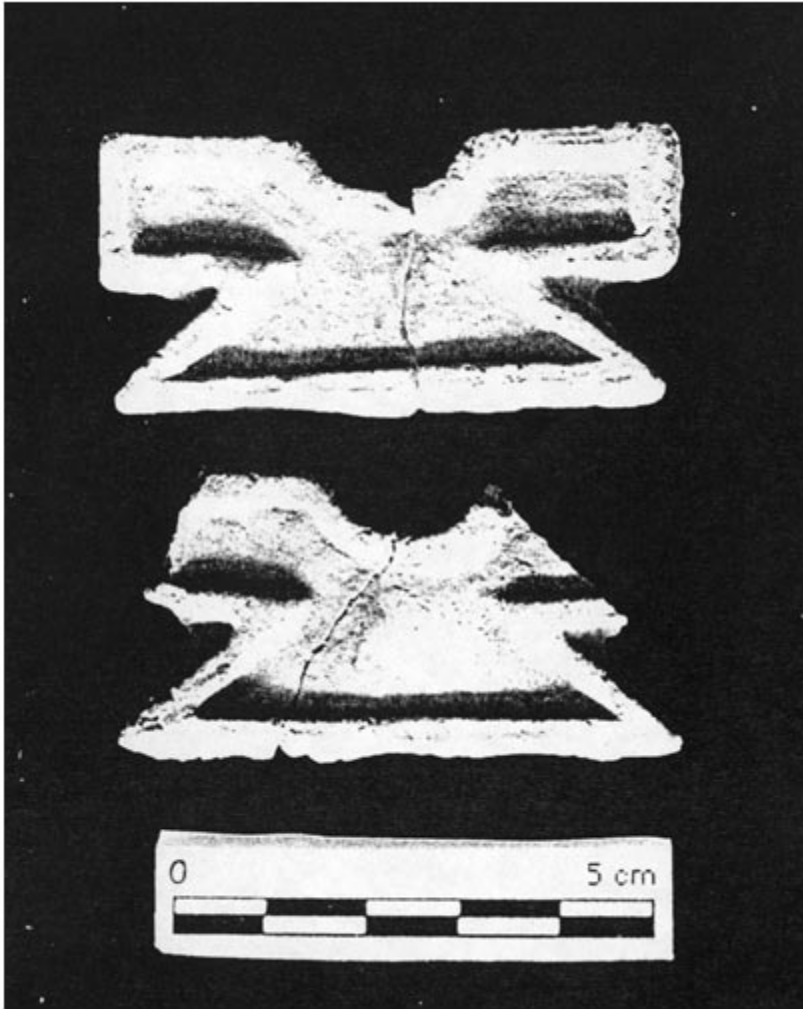


Figure PN 14-28. Ciudadela North Palace. 2 Narigueras (caja 14).

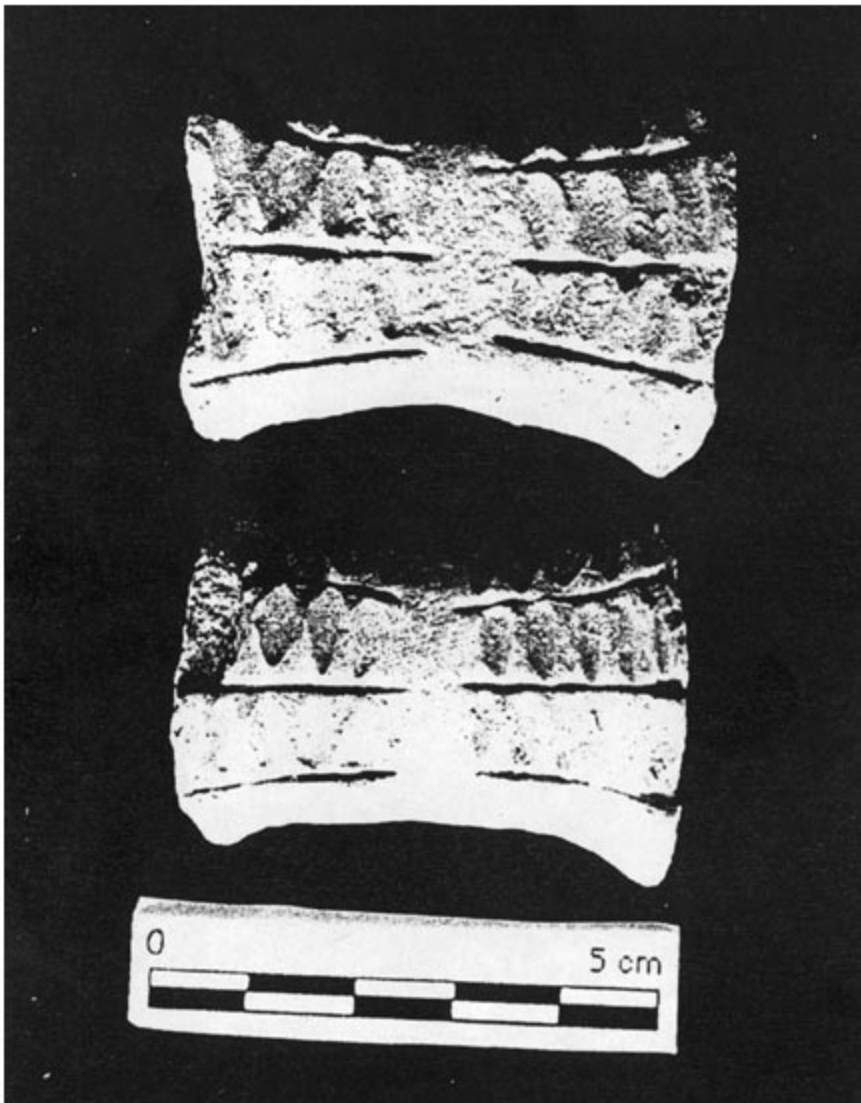


Figure PN 14-29. Ciudadela North Palace. 2 Atados (caja 14).



Figure PN 14-30. Ciudadela North Palace. Algodón (caja 15).



Figure PN 14-31. Ciudadela North Palace. Caracoles (caja 16).



Figure PN 14-32. Ciudadela North Palace. 2 Alas (caja 17).

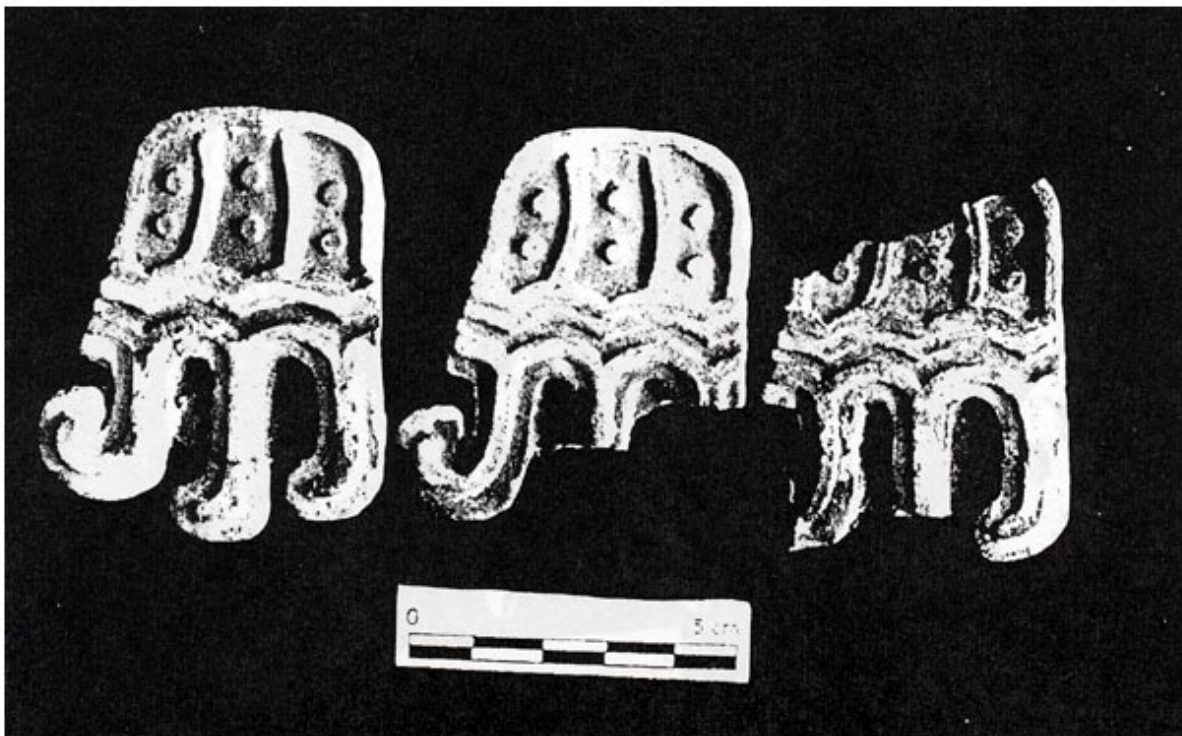


Figure PN 14-33. Ciudadela North Palace. 3 Alas (caja 17).



Figure PN 14-34. Ciudadela North Palace. Objetos circulares (caja 18).



Figure PN 14-35. Ciudadela North Palace. Estrellas (caja 19).



Figure PN 14-36. Ciudadela North Palace. Algodón (caja 20).



Figure PN 14-37. Ciudadela North Palace. Botones (caja 21).

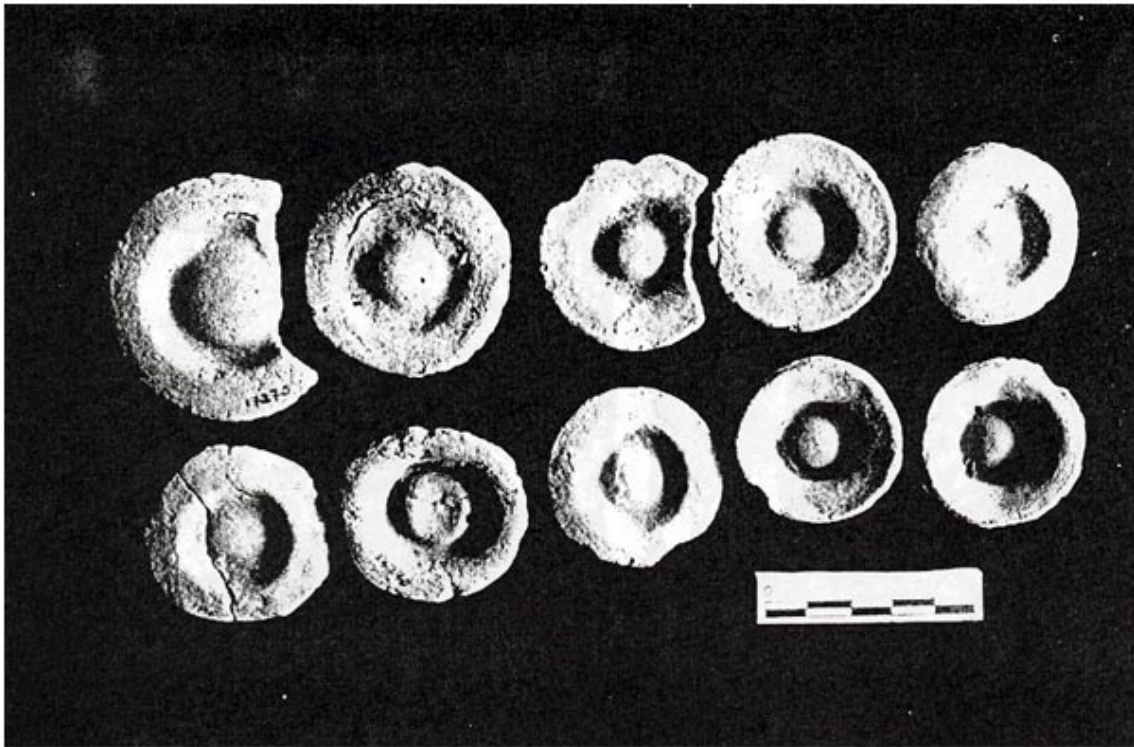


Figure PN 15-0. Ciudadela North Palace. Orejeras.

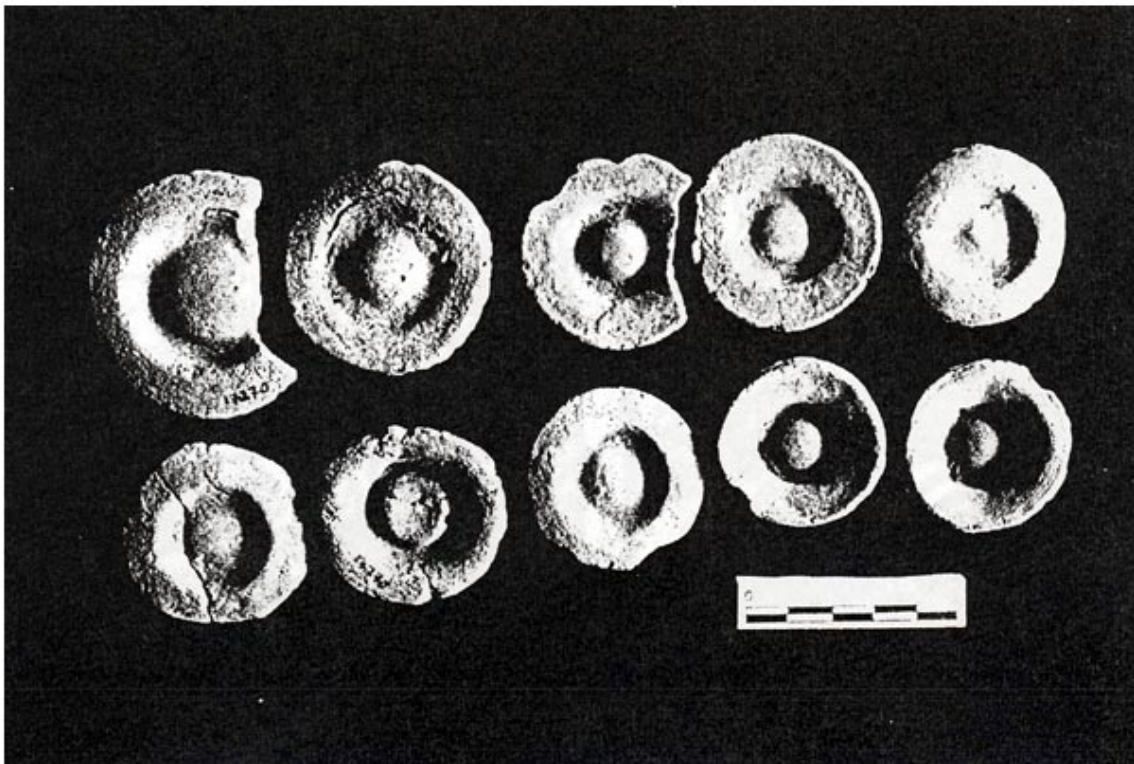


Figure PN 15-1. Ciudadela North Palace. Orejeras.



Figure PN 15-2. Ciudadela North Palace. Placa lateral.

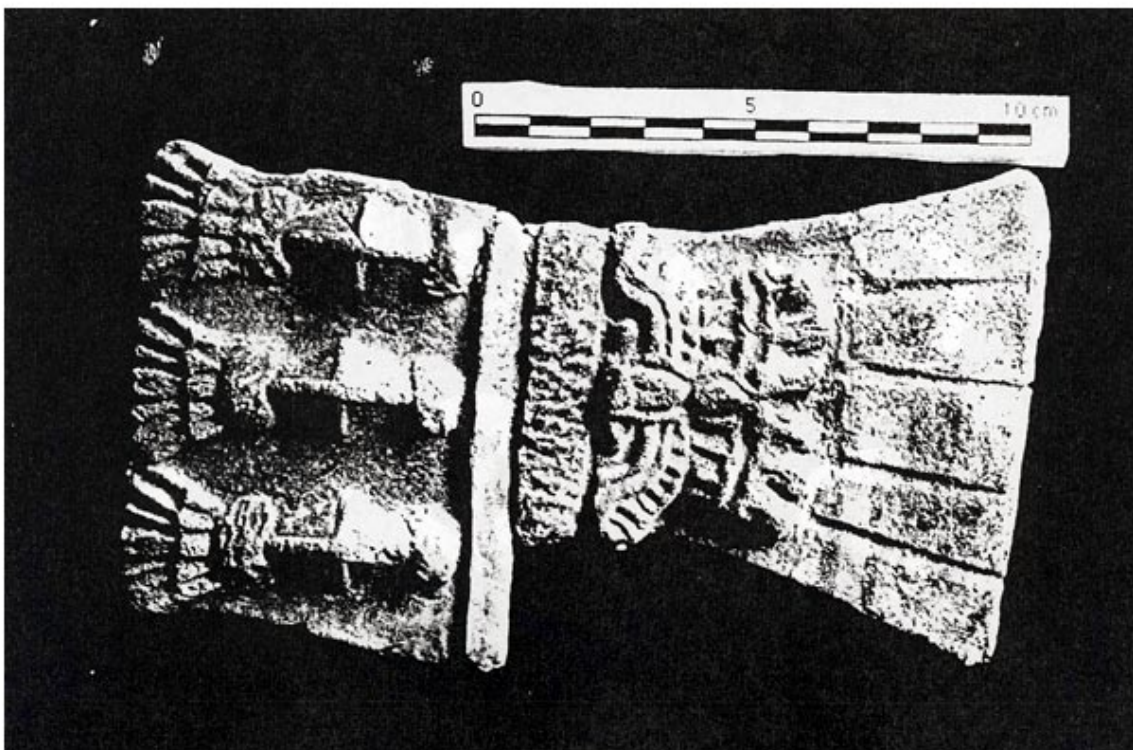


Figure PN 15-3. Ciudadela North Palace. Placa lateral.



Figure PN 15-4. Ciudadela North Palace. Mariposas.



Figure PN 15-5. Ciudadela North Palace. Mariposas.

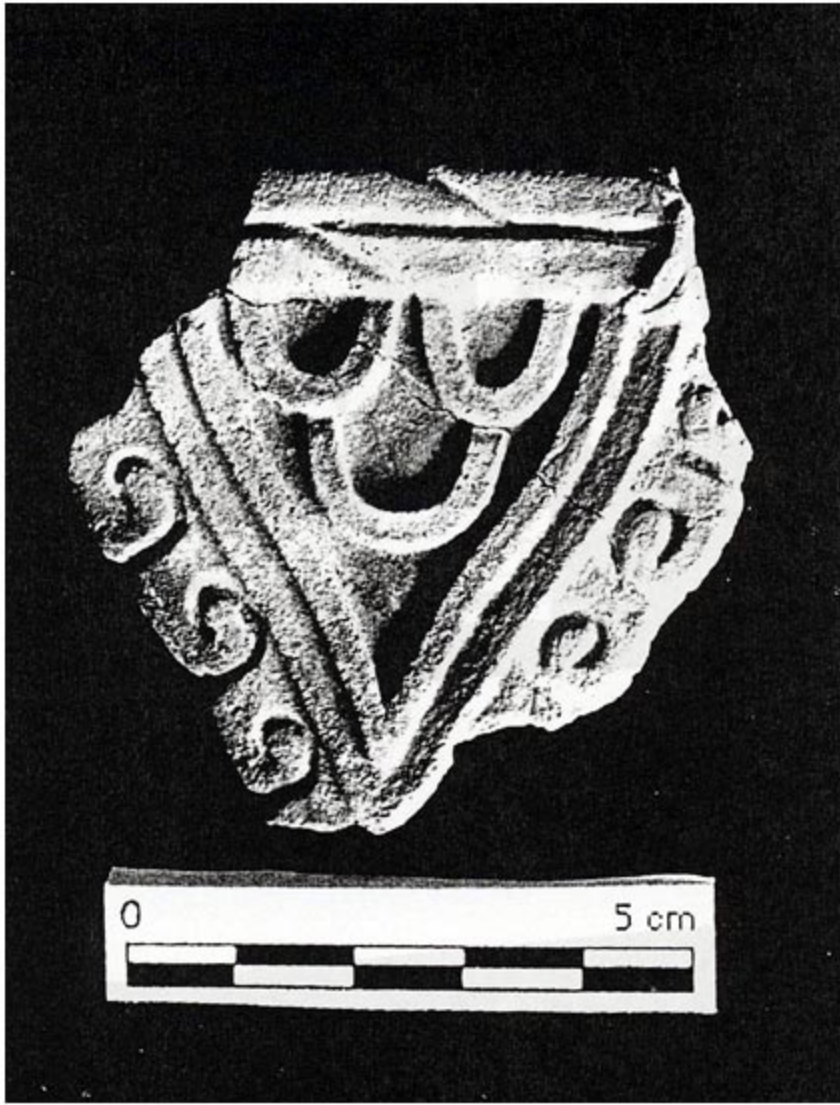


Figure PN 15-6. Ciudadela North Palace. Complejo.

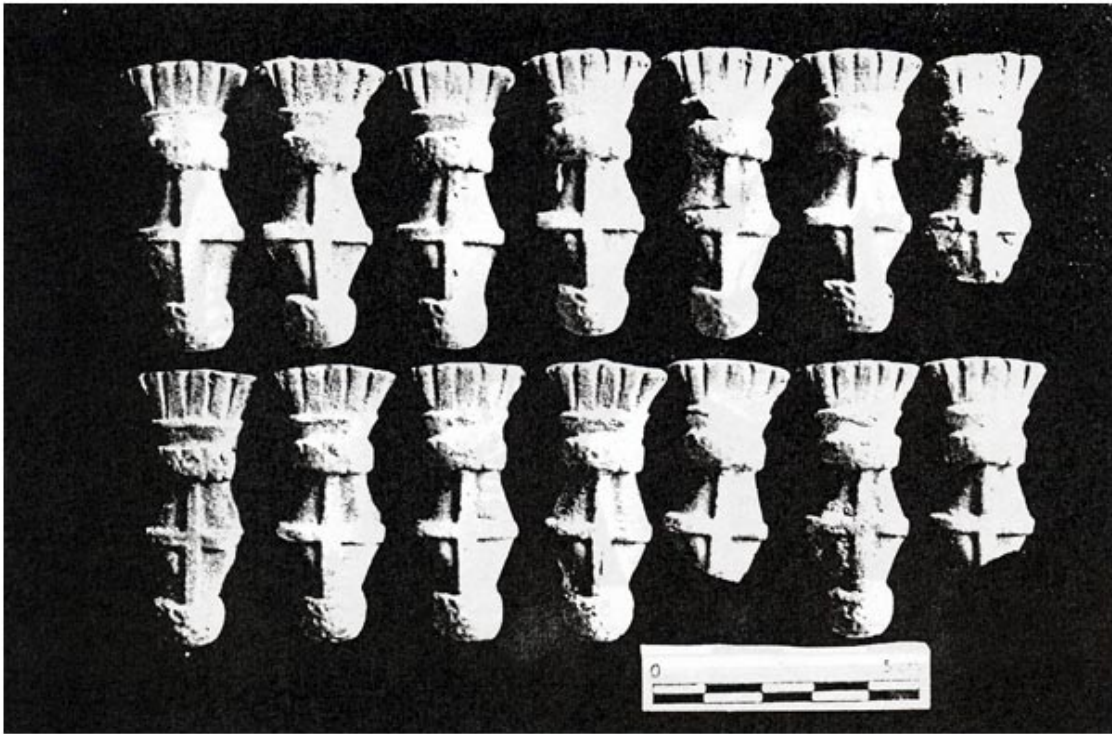


Figure PN 15-7. Ciudadela North Palace. Plumas de flechas.

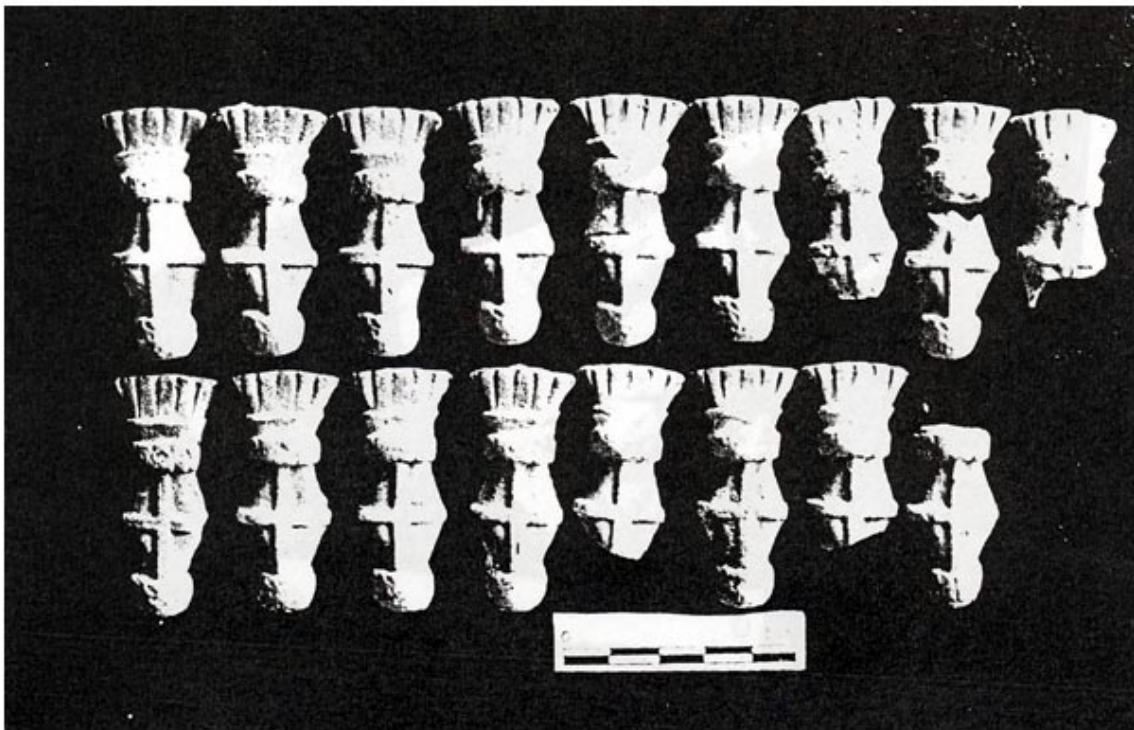


Figure PN 15-8. Ciudadela North Palace. Plumas de flechas.



Figure PN 15-9. Ciudadela North Palace. Conchas.



Figure PN 15-10. Ciudadela North Palace.



Figure PN 15-11. Ciudadela North Palace. Complejo de 3 montañas.



Figure PN 15-12. Ciudadela North Palace.

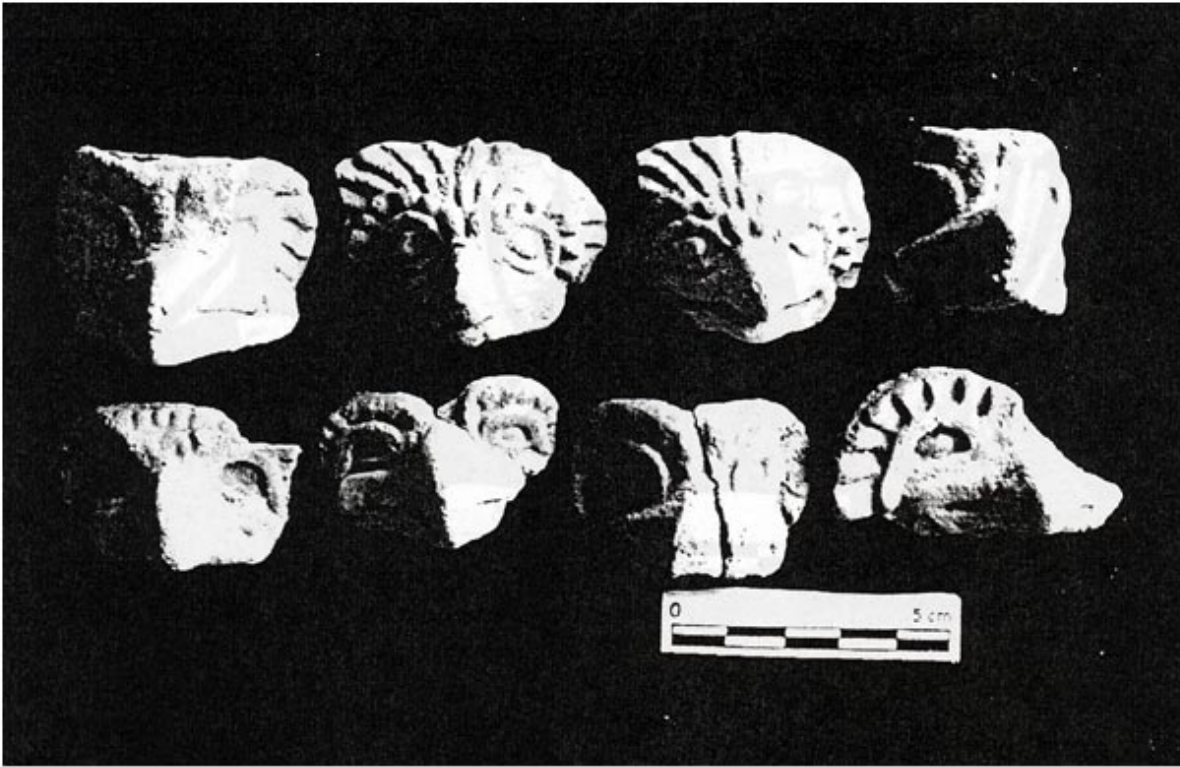


Figure PN 15-13. Ciudadela North Palace. Aves.



Figure PN 15-14. Ciudadela North Palace. Aves.



Figure PN 15-15. Ciudadela North Palace. Pico de ave.



Figure PN 15-16. Ciudadela North Palace.

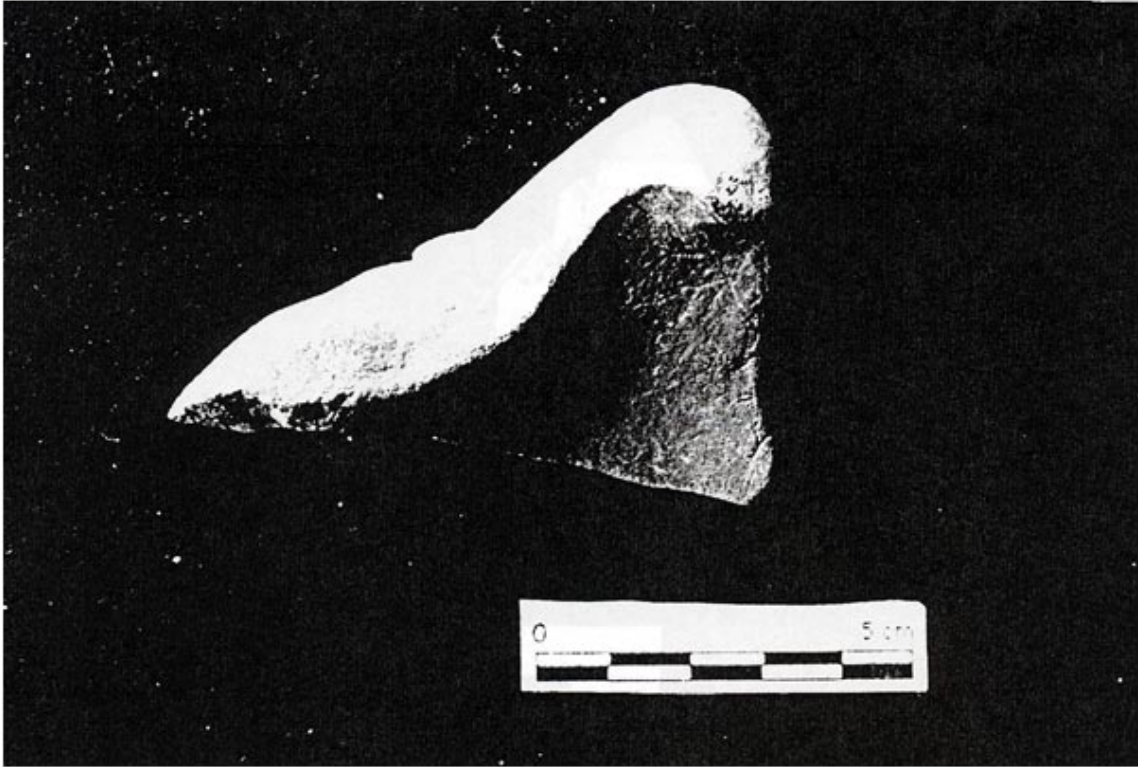


Figure PN 15-17. Ciudadela North Palace. Pico de ave.

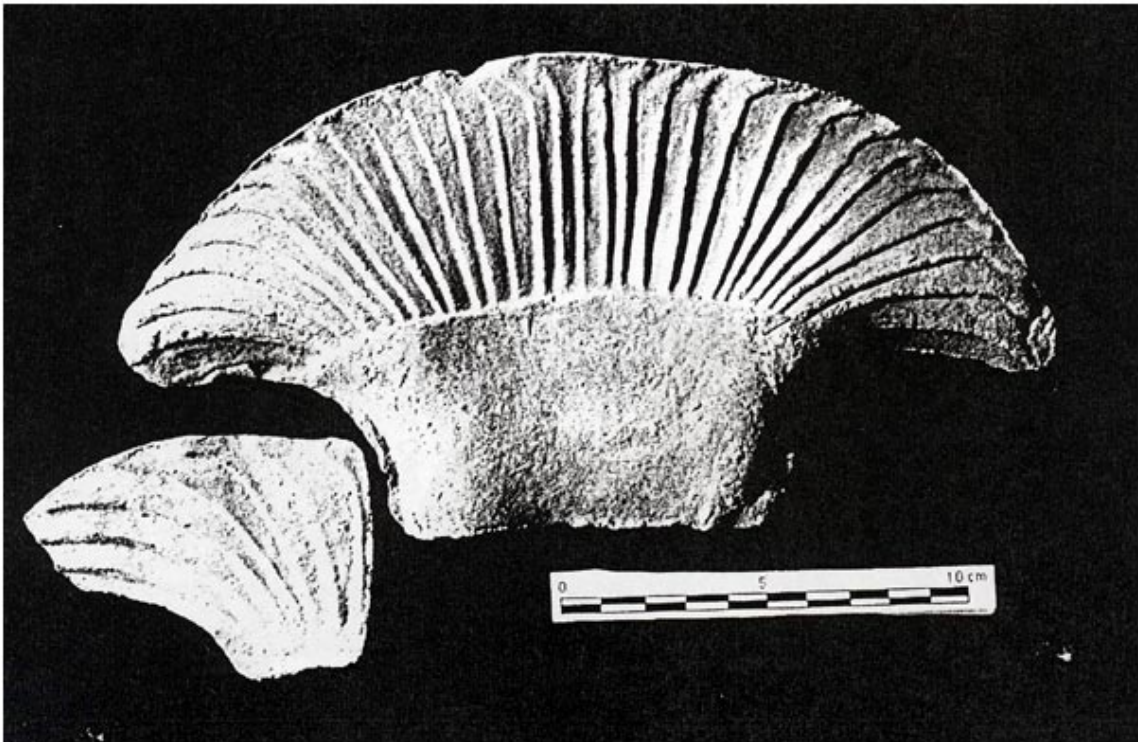


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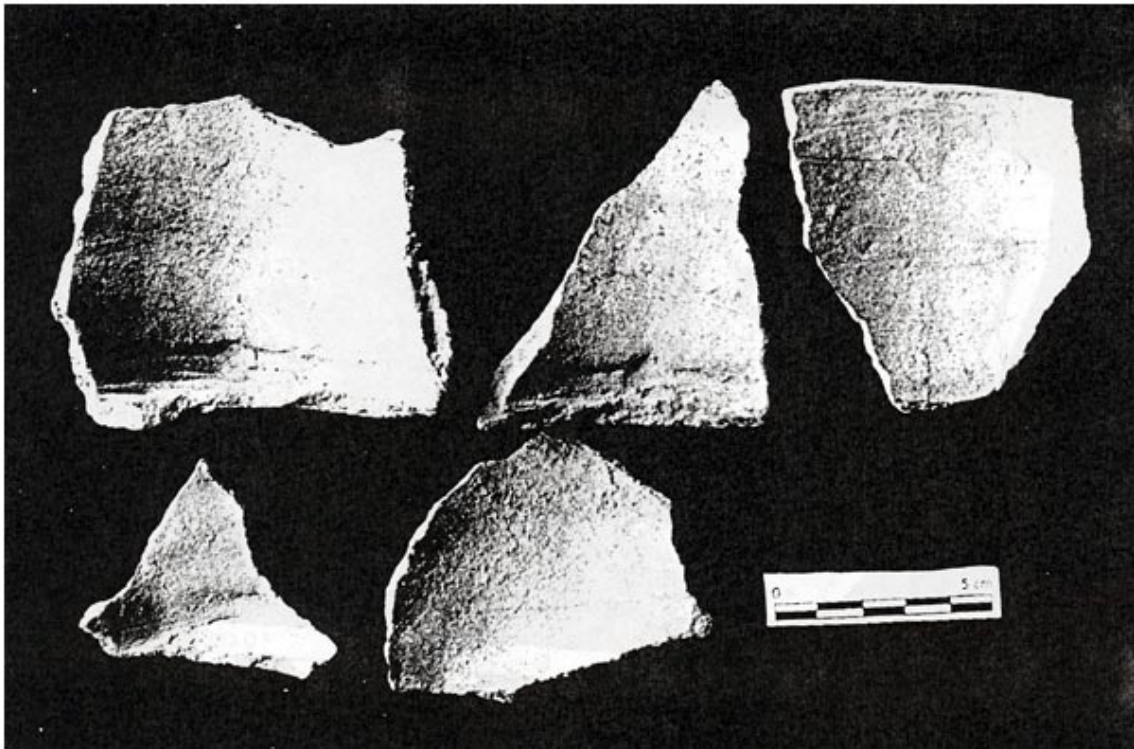


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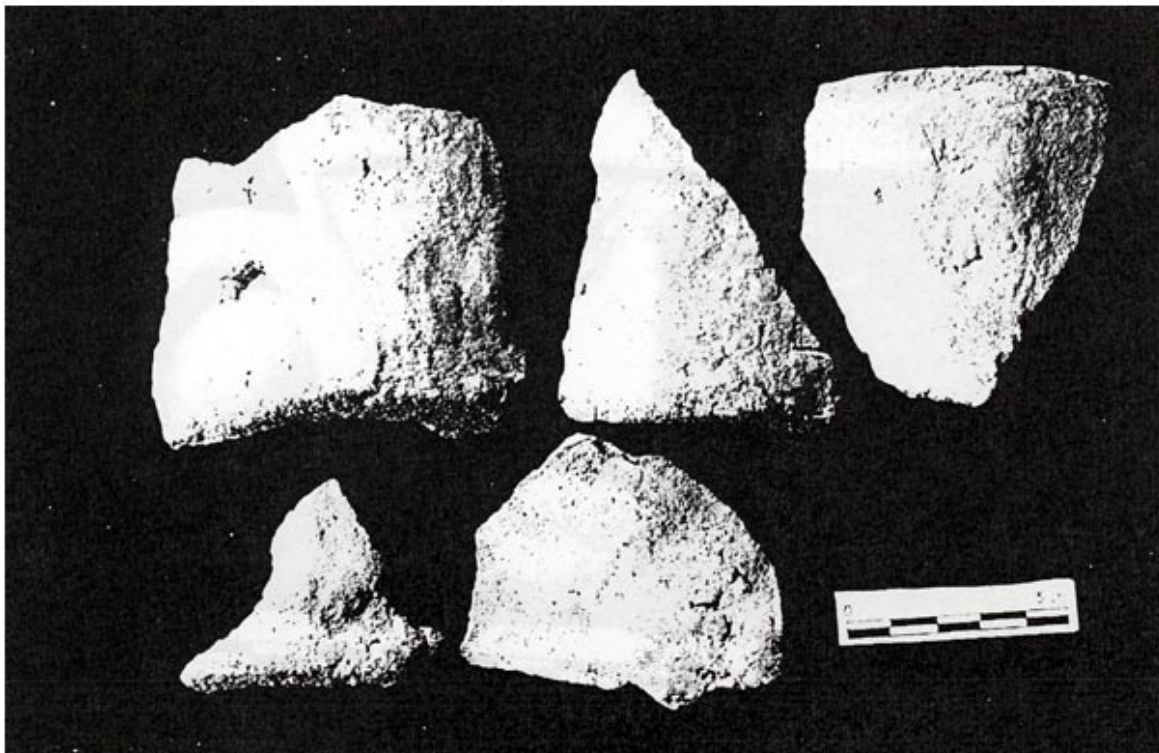


Figure PN 15-20. Ciudadela North Palace.



Figure PN 15-21. Ciudadela North Palace.

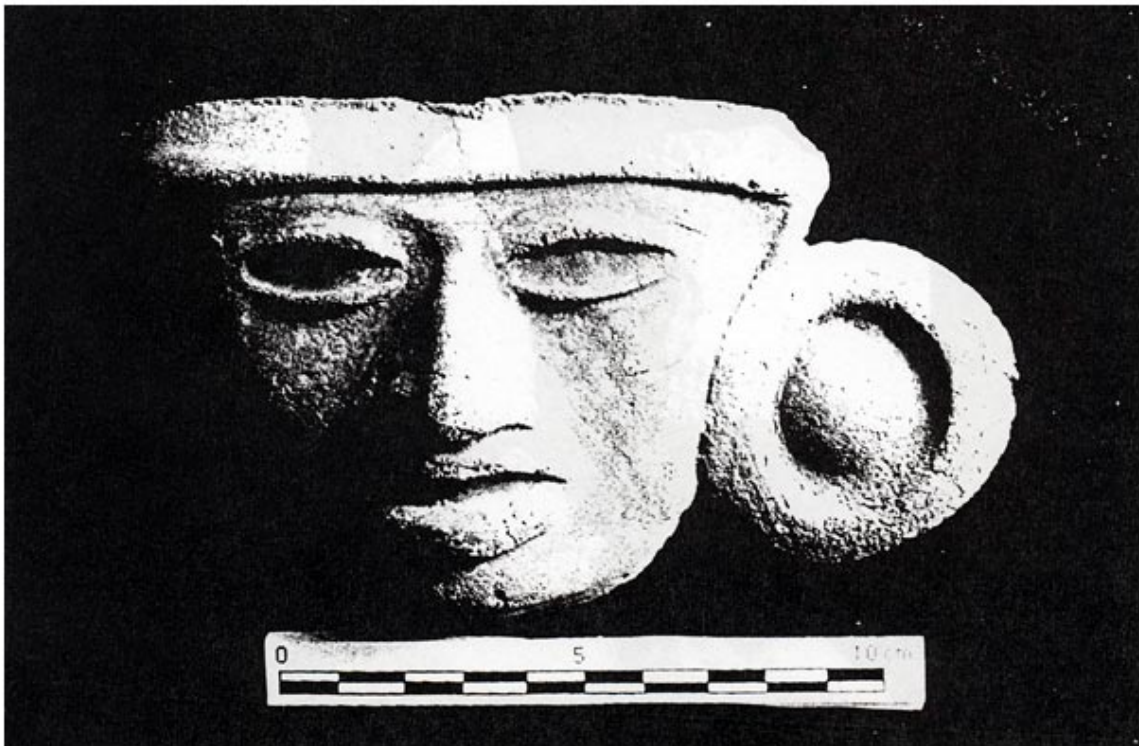


Figure PN 15-22. Ciudadela North Palace.



Figure PN 15-23. Ciudadela North Palace. Mantas.

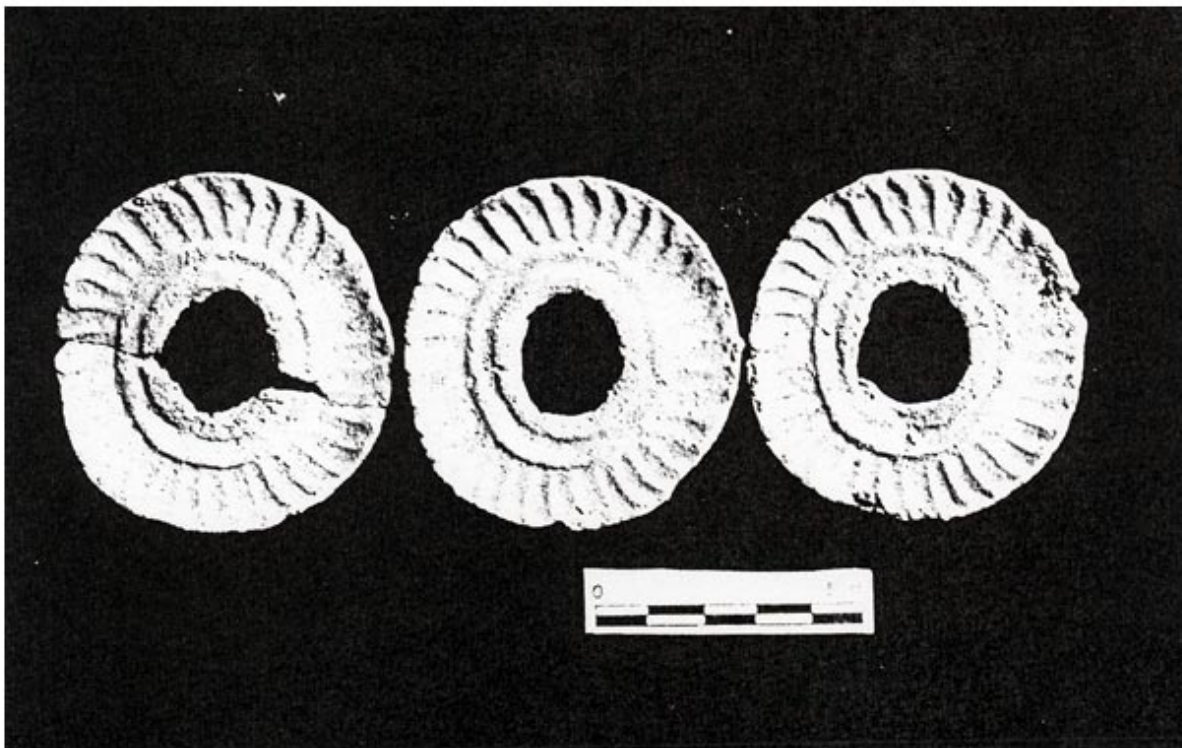


Figure PN 15-24. Ciudadela North Palace. Objetos circulares.



Figure PN 15-25. Ciudadela North Palace. Aves.