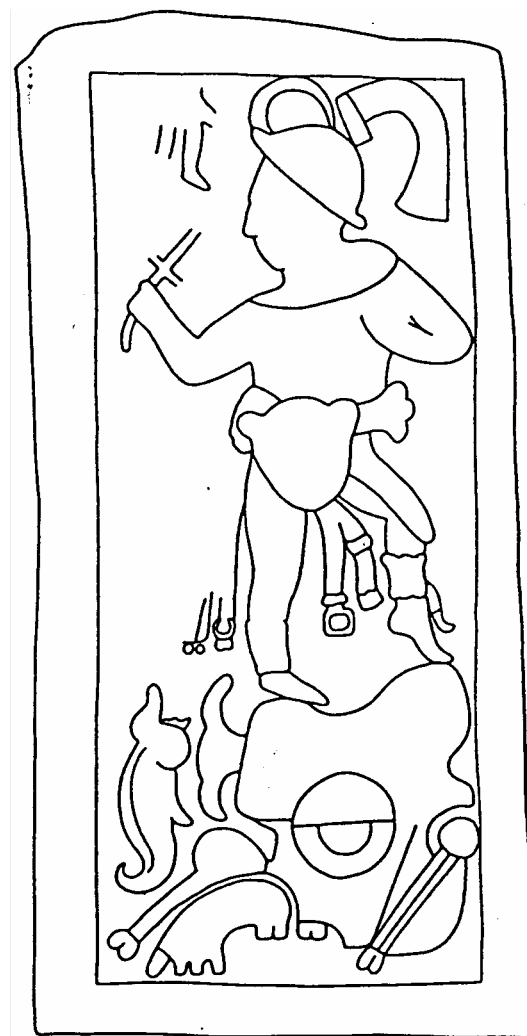


YAXUNA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

A REPORT OF THE 1986 FIELD SEASON

by David A. Freidel



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Southern Methodist University
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Section 1 Background To The Present Research

1.1 Work of the Carnegie Institution at Yaxuná

The ancient Maya ruin of Yaxuná, called Cetelac in the narrative the Itzá nation given in the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel (Roys 1933), is situated 20 km southwest of Chichén Itzá ([figure 1](#); site 16Qd(8):3, S. Garza T. and E.B. Kurjack, 1980). Intellectually and historically, Yaxuná has remained in the shadow of its great neighbor despite its respectable size (Class 2 in the Atlas of Yucatan nomenclature, *ibid*) and relative accessibility. This is understandable in light of the fact that Yaxuná lacks the spectacular standing architecture and art found at the Itzá capital/The Carnegie Institution of Washington staff did take some interest in Yaxuná during its long-term work at Chichén Itzá, for the site is the western terminus of a great stone road, or *sacbe*, stretching 100 km westwards from the massive city of Cobá in the northeastern lowlands (A. Villa R. 1934). Given this important geographic connection across the northern lowlands, H.B. Roberts carried out ten test excavations in architecture at Yaxuná in 1932 and O'Neill and Stromsvik surveyed the core of the site and rendered a Maler Convention map of it ([figure2](#); summarized in Brainerd, 1958). The ceramics collected by Roberts were subsequently analyzed by R.S. Smith, who noted the presence of Chicanel (Late Preclassic), Tzakol (Early Classic) and Tepeu (Late Classic) types in the small assemblage along with northern slatewares. Brainerd recognized the possibility of using the *sacbe* connection to link the chronologies of Cobá, also a focus of Carnegie Institution attention (Thompson, Pollock and Charlott 1932), with Chichén Itzá by way of Yaxuná.

The relative large proportion of Peten-like monochromes and some polychromes, and the presence of Puuc-style architecture and slateware sherds, suggested that excavations at Yaxuná might allow an equation of the Yucatan and Peten chronologies . . . The causeway connecting Yaxuná and Cobá, together with the proximity of Yaxuná to Chichén Itzá, suggested the likelihood of ceramic connections among these three sites, and the stelae at Cobá promised a chronological anchor of sorts. (Brainerd 1958:11) Brainerd carried out an additional 14 test excavations at Yaxuná in 1942, and, on the basis of the total Carnegie Institution effort, arrived at the conclusion that the site experienced 4 major occupational phases, Yaxuná I-IV. Yaxuná I dates to the Late Formative phase (Late Preclassic), Yaxuná II dates to the Early Regional phase (Early Classic), Yaxuná III dates to the Late Regional phase (beginning of the Late Classic), and Yaxuná IV dates to the Florescent phase (Terminal Classic; [table 1](#)). The most important chronological conclusion Brainerd drew from his work at Yaxuná was that his phase III and phase IV occupations were continuous at the site. His phase III occupation cross-correlated with Tepeu 1 in the southern lowlands, or the beginning of the Late Classic period. The implication of continuity was that the Puuc-related Florescent occupation of phase IV followed

directly and was contemporary with Tepeu 2, or the apogee of the Late Classic period in the southern lowlands. This proposed "overlap" between the Puuc cities and the southern lowland Classic cities remains a subject of controversy to the present day. Although Brainerd's hypothesis remains a major subject of long-term inquiry at Yaxuná, subsequent work in the northern lowlands favors an initiation of the Florescent (Terminal Classic) period at about 800 A.D. (Andrews and Sabloff 1986:444), corresponding to Tepeu 3 in the southern lowland ceramic chronology. Despite his cogent analysis of ceramic stylistic continuities and stratigraphic interpretation at Yaxuná, Brainerd admitted that the link between his phases III and IV was the weakest in his investigation (1958:11). One major problem in the analysis was the lack of Tepeu 2 related polychromes in the assemblage. Nevertheless, the alternatives of continuous occupation from the Classic period into the Terminal Classic period versus a hiatus between the Classic and Terminal Classic at Yaxuná have important implications for the present research and will be discussed more fully in later sections. In addition to posing an important chronological hypothesis from the vantage of Yaxuná, Brainerd's work confirmed the association of Florescent period ceramics with architectural diagnostics of the Puuc style at the site. He reported on the presence of a small standing masonry structure in the Puuc style and on the scattered elements of this style on other buildings, column drums and an architectonic bas-relief. The presence of this architectural style at the site is important because it is not featured at Cobá, to which Yaxuná is clearly linked, but rather suggests a balancing connection to contemporary sites in the western sector of the northern lowlands. Finally, Brainerd suggested that the most massive acropolis at Yaxuná, Structure 8 in his nomenclature, was built during the Late Preclassic period. The notion that very large buildings were erected in this early phase of lowland Maya society was radical at the time of his proposal, but is presently commensurate with research on the Late Preclassic currently in progress in the southern lowland region (Freidel 1979). The principal significance of Brainerd's proposed dating of Structure 8 to the present research is the notion that Yaxuná was already a substantial architectural mass and geographic landmark long before the events of the Terminal Classic period.

1.2 Yaxuná and the Terminal Classic Overlap Model

During the 1970s, the Centro Regional del Sureste of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia carried out extensive research at the site of Cobá and along the East Coast of the Yucatan Peninsula in Quintana Roo (c.f. Robles C. and Andrews 1986 for a summary of this work). One outcome of these investigations was a renewed focus on the function and significance of the great *sacbe* linking Cobá with Yaxuná. Robles C. (1976, 1979) and Benavides C. (1976), in particular, proposed that this *sacbe* linked the northern interior of the peninsula with the East Coast in a major overland trade and communication route and, through Cobá, further linked the north with the southern lowlands. Noting the evidence for Puuc style architecture at Yaxuná, these authors posited

that the community served as a "gateway" between the eastern and western sectors of the northern lowlands, situated in a frontier zone between them. Refined versions of the hypothesis have been presented by Andrews and Robles C. (1985) and Robles C. and Andrews (1986), drawing upon Robles C. ceramic analysis of Cobá (1980) and Andrews ongoing investigation of the Itzá incursion along the northern coast of the Peninsula (Andrews 1977, 1978; Andrews and others 1986), the hypothesis as presently conceived by Robles C. and Andrews is that the great *sacbe* was constructed during the Terminal Classic period (800-1000 A.D.) in conjunction with the construction of the Nohoch Mul group at Cobá and coeval with the florescence of the Puuc cities in the western sector of the northern lowlands (Robles C. and Andrews 1986:81-82). They suggest that the *sacbe* served two major functions: 1) to define the western border of the centralized state of Cobá; and 2) to facilitate commercial ties between that state and the Puuc-related communities to the west ([figure 3](#)) A significant chronological factor in the present hypothesis is Robles's identification of a Terminal Classic period overlap in the Florescence of the Puuc communities and the final apogee of the community of Cobá. He identifies a drop-off of Peten-related polychromes around 750 A.D. and the reorientation of Cobá ceramic styles towards the slateware traditions of the western sector of the northern lowlands. Concomitant with this reorientation, Cobá and Yaxuná establish the *sacbe*-link.

A further chronological factor is the currently posited overlap between these states and Chichén Itzá, based upon a proposed overlap of the Cehpech ceramic sphere of the Terminal Classic northern lowlands, and the Sotuta ceramic sphere specifically associated with the rise of Chichén Itzá and its outposts. Robles and Andrews (1986; see also Andrews and Robles C. 1985) suggest that subsequent to the establishment of the link between Cobá and Yaxuná, Yaxuná became the focal point for a contest between Chichén Itzá and Cobá for supremacy on the peninsula. Ultimately, the government of Chichén Itzá won this contest; but an implication of the timing proposed by Robles and Andrews is that Chichén first conquered the Puuc cities of the western sector before finally confronting and subduing the eastern sector (c.f. Robles and Andrews 1986: figure 3.7). To briefly summarize the hypothesis offered by Robles C. and Andrews, they suggest that the *sacbe* between Cobá and Yaxuná was constructed early in the Terminal Classic period to facilitate interaction between two major geographic zones, a Western Sphere dominated by the Puuc cities and related communities on the northwestern plain, and an Eastern Sphere, centrally focused on the huge city of Cobá. Subsequently, the Terminal Classic occupation at Yaxuná persisted after the collapse of the Puuc sites and became a focal point for confrontation between Chichén Itzá and Cobá. This hypothesis has important empirical and theoretical entailments for research at Yaxuná and for interpretation of Terminal Classic social dynamics in the northern lowlands. Empirically, further investigation at Yaxuná should reveal that the Terminal Classic occupation at the site endured for several centuries and was substantial and extensive, both in terms of resident population and in terms of public construction. At the same

time, this hypothesis would not necessarily call for continuity between the Late Classic and Terminal Classic occupations of Yaxuná as in Brainerd's hypothesis. Since the drop-off in Late Classic Peten-related polychromes marks the advent of the Terminal Classic period at Cobá, the absence of such markers at Yaxuná would be expectable in the Robles and Andrews scenario. Theoretically, this hypothesis calls for the successful establishment of at least one large scale state in the lowlands out of Classic period institutional antecedents: Cobá. Robles and Andrews specifically suggest that this is the case: the eastern and western spheres differ in this respect. While the Western sphere has several *sacbe* systems that would appear to delineate territorial units of various sizes, the Eastern sphere has only one, which is the largest of them all, the Cobá *sacbe* network. We believe this situation reflects certain fundamental differences in the political and economic organization of the Eastern and Western cultural spheres. (Robles C. and Andrews 1986:78)

In this respect, it is notable that Cobá is a northern lowland state evincing important political and economic ties to the southern lowland kingdoms of the Classic period/The timing and conditions under which large scale states formed in the Terminal Classic northern lowlands would appear to be the central issue for investigation at Yaxuná and in its vicinity. Both traditionally, and in the present consensus of scholars working the northern lowlands (Andrews and Sabloff 1986), the city of Chichén Itzá was the capital of such a large scale state. In contrast to Cobá, Chichén Itzá has been regarded as quite distinctive and innovative in its political and religious symbolism, perforce in its political and military organization. Although earlier scholars attributed such innovations to Mexican influence (Tozzer 1957), the present trend is to regard them as equally derived from local lowland Maya antecedents (Lincoln, 1986; Sabloff and Andrews, 1986). If Cobá had already established such a large scale territorial state prior to the rise of Chichén Itzá, as proposed by Robles and Andrews, then it offers the best local inspiration for such organization at Chichén Itzá. An alternative hypothesis would be that Chichén Itzá initiated the innovations in military and political strategies aimed at territorial expansion and consolidation, and that Cobá established a large scale state as a local defensive reaction to this development. In this alternative scenario, the creation of the great *sacbe* to Yaxuná, and the establishment of a local political capital there, would have been the major expression of a political and territorial confrontation with Chichén Itzá. In light of the established affinities between Yaxuná and the Puuc related Western Sphere, such a confrontation would have been not only between Cobá and Chichén Itzá, but also between the Puuc communities and Chichén Itzá. There are good theoretical reasons for supposing that such large scale geopolitical struggles would manifest in a confrontation between such neighboring political capitals as Chichén Itzá and Yaxuná. The emerging picture of Classic period political and territorial struggles in the southern lowlands, significantly enhanced through the use of hieroglyphic texts and associated iconography (Mathews 1986), shows that generally such warfare occurred between neighboring small scale states and took the form of temporary

subordination of royal rivals rather than permanent conquest and appropriation of territory. Such boundary maintenance warfare has its exceptions, but they are currently rare compared to the evidence for this organizational strategy. Couching a major struggle for hegemony in the northern lowlands in terms of a conflict between close neighbors would be commensurate with institutional antecedents in the Maya region. The empirical expectations of this alternative hypothesis are that the Terminal Classic occupation of Yaxuná was brief (in light of the relatively brief "stand-off between Chichén Itzá and Cobá), late in the Terminal Classic period, and highly specific in function: a political and military capital from which to confront Chichén Itzá.

1.3 Previous Research in the Vicinity of Yaxuná

There are a number of small ancient ruins in the vicinity of Yaxuná ([figure 4](#)) which have recently received considerable attention because they had remarkable architectonic bas-reliefs. These bas-reliefs have been studied and recorded by Juan Aban of Yaxcaba and those presently known have been removed to the library in Yaxcaba to avoid illicit sale. The principal sites containing these bas-reliefs are X'telhu and Popola. Ian Graham submitted sketch maps of these sites to the CRY-INAH in 1984, in which he called the site of Popola "Pusil". Merle Greene Robertson undertook systematic analysis of the bas-reliefs housed in Yaxcaba in 1984 and 1985 (Greene Robertson 1986). In her publication, Merle Greene Robertson refers to the site of Popola by that name, hence that is the name employed by the present project. Inspection of the distribution of the sites containing bas-reliefs ([figure 4](#)) shows that they surround the much more massive center of Yaxuná on three sides. Because of this distribution, they are clearly germane to any long-term interpretation of Yaxuná. In light of the very rich iconographic and epigraphic record at Chichén Itzá, the prospect of a roughly contemporary record associated with a neighboring rival polity based at Yaxuná promises a major independent source of information on interaction between them to compare to the archaeological record. Merle Greene Robertson (1986) suggests that because the bas-reliefs housed at Yaxcaba are stylistically quite distinctive from styles found nearby at Chichén Itzá, that they are probably not contemporary. Further, she suggests that they show affinities with Classic period styles, and hence may be earlier than the Terminal Classic and Early Postclassic styles found at Chichén Itzá. As discussed in sections below, however, the present project investigated the architectural contexts of the X'telhu and Popola monuments, and those contexts clearly point to a Terminal Classic dating for the bas-reliefs. Moreover, two comparable bas-reliefs are currently known from Yaxuná, one originally reported by Brainerd (1958, figure B) and a second one discovered in the course of survey in 1986. The bas-relief reported by Brainerd was *in situ* at the time of his investigations in the context of a structure evincing the tenoned block masonry of Florescent or Terminal Classic style. The emerging corpus of reliefs and their implications for interpretation of Yaxuná are discussed below.

Section 2 The 1986 Summer Field Season

2.1 The Site Survey

During the month of July, 1986, the SMU- NGS-INAH Yaxuná Archaeological Survey initiated a topographic base map of the core of the site using two EDM theodolites ([figure 5](#)). Surface inspection showed that while the Carnegie Maler convention map ([figure 2](#)) was generally correct in many respects, that smaller structures were missing, and the proportions and design of larger structures were inaccurate. Mapping began with the establishment of true north and the exact location of the site by turning an angle off of the road between the town of Yaxuná and the town of Pisté as shown on Landsat imagery provided by E.B. Kurjack and the Atlas Project and as corroborated by the government quadrat map of the area. This angle was taken to establish an East-West baseline which would conveniently place major public structures to either north or south for purposes of designation in a new nomenclature using 500 by 500 m squares ([table 2](#)).

2.2 The Central 1 Sq Km Quadrat

Primary datum was established at the center of the site using the same principle: placing the large northern group in one quadrant. Unfortunately, this North-South baseline necessarily bisected Structure 17 in Brainerd's nomenclature (Structure 5E- 3). These two baselines were extended 500 m out from primary datum in each direction. Then the central four 500 by 500 m squares were closed and resurveyed until error on the overall 1 square km traverse was reduced to no error of angle and 20 cm error in distance. This kind of accuracy is made possible by the use of laser theodolites. Once the four 500 by 500 m squares constituting the central square km of the site were firmly established, the project set permanent cement stations at 100 m intervals along the East-West and North-South central baselines, and at 200 m intervals along the southern, eastern, and northern perimeters. The western perimeter was not established with permanent stations due to lack of time. These permanent stations are being guarded by the townspeople of Yaxuná and should be ready for immediate use in the 1987 season.

2.3 Survey Squares and Structure Nomenclature

The square nomenclature used at Yaxuná is essentially that used at the site of Tikal (Carr and Hazard 1961), with the difference that Squares are lettered south to north and numbered west to east. The basepoint for the grid is located 2-5 km

south of the central site sq km, and 2.5 km. east of it to allow expansion of the survey in that direction as necessary. Primary datum is thus at coordinates 2500 North by 2500 East. The four squares of the central sq km arc, clockwise from the south- west: 5E, 6E, 6F and 5F. Individual raised structures, including basal substructures, are sequentially numbered, e.g. 5E-1, 5E-2, etc. A concordance of the Carnegie structure nomenclature published by Brainerd and that initiated by the SMU-NGS-INAH project is given in table 2.

2.4 Survey Methods

Two teams of 3 Surveyors each were deployed in the field. Each team included an individual on the instrument, an individual on the rod, and an individual recording results in the field book. The project used two EDM (electronic distance measuring) theodolites. The great advantages of this advanced technology in Maya field survey is well described in Sabloff and others (1985:14-15). The project borrowed one of the theodolites from the University of New Mexico, a Zeiss RSM 3, and rented a Leitz SDM 3E in Dallas. Experience with these instruments shows that the Leitz is easier to use in the field, but both greatly increase the speed and accuracy of topographic survey under these field conditions. Once the baselines were established, the two teams of surveyors turned their attention to the contour mapping of the major structures in the center which were cleared of underbrush by workmen from Yaxuná. The contour interval used is 50 cm., which registers all significant surface information on basic structure design and proportions. Where remains of walls, stairs and superstructures were preserved on the surface, these were recorded and placed on the contour map.

2.5 Structures Surveyed

In addition to the major architectural complexes, the project mapped the structures in the plaza area around the terminus of the *sacbe*, including the structure that marks the end of this *sacbe*, ([figure 5](#): Structures 6F-22,23 and 24; Structures 6E-11, 12, 13 and 14). The main *sacbe* from Cobá was designated *Sacbe 1*. Two other masonry concourses linking structure groups within the site, *Sacbe 1* and *Sacbe 3* were also mapped. Finally, 2 discrete structures to the north of the northern group (Structures 6F-25 and 26) were mapped as potential examples of Terminal Classic elite residences.

2.6 Architectural Detail

The P.I. and the photographer took systematic observations and photographs of all surface remains of architecture on the central groups (c.f. [figures 6](#) and [7](#)). Further, carved stone monuments discovered by the project, and those

previously described by Brainerd, were photographed. The best preserved of the Terminal Classic bas-reliefs, Yaxuná monument 1 in the vicinity of Structure 6F-14, was redrawn as Brainerd's rendering (1958: figure B) misses significant detail ([figure 8](#)).

2.7 Reconnaissance in the Yaxuná Area

While in the field, the project became aware of a collection of architectonic stone bas-reliefs which are kept in the town of Yaxcaba, which is the modern administrative center of the local area. These reliefs showed stylistic indications of dating from the Terminal Classic period and show affinities to the architectonic bas-relief found in the ballcourt group at Yaxuná (see Section 3.7; [figure 8](#)), and hence were of immediate significance to the Yaxuná research. The sites which originally housed these monuments are small, and are situated to the north, south, and west of Yaxuná and in proximity to this substantially larger site ([figure 4](#)). This area pattern suggests that such small sites were satellites to Terminal Classic Yaxuná. Hence some time was spent on reconnaissance of these sites and examination of the relief monuments. Outside of Yaxuná, the central group at the satellite site of Popola ([figure 9](#)) was surveyed and photographed by the project to document archaeological context for a collection of bas-reliefs removed from this site to the library in Yaxcaba. The satellite site of X'telhu was personally inspected by the P.I. to establish archaeological context for the bas-reliefs taken from that site to the library in Yaxcaba. These investigations confirmed the Terminal Classic date for the monuments, for the range style structures they were originally built into display characteristic tenoned block masonry of that period. The Colonial period church which incorporated Monument 1 from Mopila was photographed, as was the masonry wall in Kancabdzonot which incorporated Monument 1 from that site. Both of these monuments are presently in the Yaxcaba library. All of the monuments in this library, removed there by the townspeople to avoid illicit sale, were photographed and systematically noted. The monuments from Mopila and Kancabdzonot have hieroglyphic inscriptions, and were proportionally rendered for detailed analysis ([figures 10](#) and [11](#)).

Section 3 Results of The 1986 Field Season: The Site Survey

3.1 Structure Mapping

The survey at Yaxuná concentrated on the three major architectural complexes in the center: a massive acropolis, Structures 5F-1 through 4 (Brainerd: Structure 8); a northern group of buildings, Structures 6F-1 through 19 (Brainerd: Structures 1-6); and a similarly large southeastern group, Structures 6E-1 through 10 (Brainerd: Structures 13-15). The results of previous work by Brainerd and other Carnegie Institution staff showed that the northern and southeastern

groups contained architectural and ceramic expressions of the Terminal Classic period (Brainerd 1958), and hence were likely coeval with the construction of the *sacbe* from Cobá (Robles and Andrews 1986). The great acropolis at the center of the site, Structures 5F-1 through 4, is clearly the spatial focal point of the community in all occupations. The contour mapping of these three architectural aggregates was completed during the first season ([figure 5](#)) and the final maps are plotted and are being inked at a scale of 1:200.

3.2 Terminal Classic Occupation at Yaxuná

Preliminary Correlation of the evidence for Terminal Classic, or Florescent Period (Andrews 1965), architecture with basic group design suggests that the major complexes were in place before the Terminal Classic period and were superficially modified at that time. Identification of Terminal Classic construction is based upon the presence of tenoned wall stones, boot-shaped corbel vault stones, and tenoned and free-standing columns both plain and with three-part bands (Pollock 1980:574), in the context of masonry superstructures.

3.3 Terminal Classic Refurbishment in the Northern Group

The contour map of Structure 6F-4 (Brainerd's Structure 4; [figure 12](#)), shows that the longest axis of the structure is north-south, and that its primary orientation is to the west, completing a group of three large pyramids with Structures 6F-2 and 6F-3. During Terminal Classic times, the southern and northern faces of Structure 6F-4 were refurbished. The northern face exhibits a stairway with two stelae: a re-erected Early Classic monument (Brainerd 1958: [figure A](#)), and a plain monument halfway up the stairway discovered in 1986 ([figure 7b](#)). Brainerd's excavation and the base of this stairway (1958: T 28) yielded a pure sample of Terminal Classic period ceramics. The southern face was refurbished with a vaulted range structure decorated with tenoned half-columns and freestanding columns ([figure 7a](#)) along its facade. The vault stones in this building are boot-shaped. Thus refurbished, Structure 6F-4 faces a multi-roomed superstructure directly to its south, Structure 6F-7, and beyond that, a Terminal Classic addition to the northern group along its southern margin (Structures 6F-9 through 16; [figures 5](#) and [13](#)). While it is possible that the other major structures in this northern group were also modified during the Terminal-Classic period, there is no evidence of this on the surface in the form of masonry superstructure remains. Preserved sections of sub-structure retaining walls on Structure 6F-3 show small, well cut load-bearing masonry of a kind that spans the Classic- Terminal Classic juncture. Structure 6F-2 did exhibit a terrace of well cut, monolithic, blocks approximately half- way up its eastern face. As discussed in following sections, such masonry pertains to Early Classic architectural styles in the northern lowlands. However, blocks of this kind were reused in Terminal Classic construction at Yaxuná as well. The surface evidence is inadequate to

determine whether the use of monolithic blocks is primary or secondary on this structure. Present evidence suggests that refurbishment in the Terminal Classic period was selective in the northern group and concentrated in the vicinity of Structure 6F-4.

3.4 Terminal Classic Refurbishment in the Southeastern Group

There are similar indications of selective modification of structures in the southeastern group (Structures 6E-1 through 10; [figure 14](#)). As in the case of the northern group, there are 3 major pyramidal substructures in the southeastern group: Structures 6E-23 and 4. The most decisive evidence of refurbishment occurs on Structure 6E-3. The primary orientation of the pyramid is towards the plaza it shares with Structures 6E-2 and 4. In the Terminal Classic period, the northern, "backside", of Structure 6E-3 witnessed the construction of an elaborate two-stage masonry range structure with boot-shaped stones in the corbel arches. A stairway splits the lower tier of masonry super-structures into two distinct buildings and gives access to a single range structure on the second tier. The wall masonry in these masonry super-structures is of the characteristic tenoned block used in Terminal Classic times. This refurbishment orients the major Terminal Classic construction on the southeastern group to *Sacbe* 1, a few meters north of this building.

Terminal Classic period refurbishment on the southeastern group beyond the clear evidence of the masonry superstructure on Structure 6F-3 is more difficult to ascertain. There are preserved sections of small block load-bearing walls on Structure 6E-2, which could date to either Classic or Terminal Classic times. Structures 6E-7 and 8, and Structures 6E-9 and 10 both appear to be subsequent modifications of the primary acropolis, and Structure 6E-8 shows evidence of a perishable superstructure in the form of foundation braces. These foundation braces employ tenoned block masonry of Terminal Classic style.

3.5 Terminal Classic Construction in the Main Plaza

Sacbe 2 connects the southeastern group to Structure 6E-12, which shares a possibly artificial rise with Structure 6E-13, the terminus of *Sacbe* 1 from Cobá. There are reasons to suggest that this *sacbe*, which parallels *Sacbe* 1, was constructed also in Terminal Classic times. Massive monolithic blocks dressed on all four sides, a masonry form found at Izamal (Lincoln 1980, Andrews 1965) and regarded as dating to Early Classic times, were observed sporadically incorporated into the building platform of the masonry superstructure on Structure 6E-3 interspersed with smaller blocks. While monolithic block architecture is generally regarded as Early Classic, it may be significant that a super-structure surmounting a pyramid at the site of Ikil employs this masonry technique (site 16Qd(8):4). Andrews and Stuart (1968), suggest that this

superstructure dates to the Late Classic period. The pyramid was subsequently significantly modified during the Terminal Classic period by the addition of masonry range structures, analogous to the modifications found at Yaxuná. The Ikil superstructure is presently unique, and the monolithic blocks are only used in the outer walls, so that they might have been reused from earlier construction at the site. Nevertheless, their final context suggests the possibility that monolithic block masonry at Yaxuná may also date later than Brainerd's ceramic analysis would indicate. Such monolithic blocks were also incorporated into the stairway giving access to the southeastern group from *Sacbe* 2. Monolithic blocks were found interspersed with smaller block masonry in the retaining walls of Structures 6E-11, 12 and 14. Finally, a large number of these blocks were observed scattered along the base of the primary substructure of the southeastern group on its southwestern corner. This scatter could not have resulted from collapse, hence it suggests the disruption and cessation of refurbishment using these monolithic blocks. Since both the ceramic materials from Brainerd's analysis (1958) and surface architecture indicate that the Terminal Classic was the final period of public construction at Yaxuná, the disrupted reuse of the monolithic blocks likely dates to this period. If the incorporation of such monoliths in the clearly Terminal Classic superstructures on Structure 6E-3 is a useful guide, then these other buildings likely pertain to the Terminal Classic refurbishment of Yaxuná.

3.6 Terminal Classic Refurbishment of the Central Acropolis

One possible quarry source for the well cut monolithic blocks is Structure 5F-1 ([figure 15](#)). Survey along the southern face of this acropolis revealed a fragment of a stepped terrace or stairway constructed of these monoliths. As noted in above sections, Brainerd (1958) suggested a Late Formative date for this acropolis from ceramics in test excavations along its base. There is reason to suspect that Structure 5F-1 was originally constructed as a symmetrical acropolis with a single large secondary sub-structure facing south onto a raised plaza which it shared with Structures 5E-1 and 2. In the first place, the basal width of the primary substructure is narrower at the eastern end than at the western end. This would make sense if Structure 5F-3 was a major modification of the original design in which basal materials in the form of slope fall from above were reused to construct the summit of Structure 5F-3 over the ruins of an earlier upper plaza on the acropolis. Secondly, although Structure 5E-1 (Brainerd's Structure 9) was not contour mapped, it was cleared of underbrush and it is certain that the Maler convention orientation given by Brainerd is incorrect: there are no basal wall fragments and the general orientation of the slopes suggests that this structure faced Structure 5E-2 (Brainerd's structure 10), across a shared plaza. In this regard, Structure 5F-3 not only violates the symmetry of the acropolis; it also violates the primary north-south axis of the overall group to which the acropolis belongs.

What the addition of Structure 5F-3 does do is orient this architectural mass, 26 m high, towards the terminus of *Sacbe* 1. The complete absence of preserved wall fragments on Structures 5E-1 and 2, combined with the indications of quarrying activity on the southern face of Structure 5F-1, suggest that this plaza group was largely ignored as a focus for public activity during the Terminal Classic period. Structure 5F-3, on the other hand, is integral to the Terminal Classic focus on the inter-site *sacbe* from Cobá.

3.7 The Terminal Classic Ballcourt Group

Beyond the modification of existing architecture at Yaxuná, there is evidence for an primary Terminal Classic period addition to the southern face of the northern group (Structures 6F-9 through 16; [figure 13](#)). Access to this group from the Terminal Classic focus of the community in front of Structure 5F-3 is provided by a broad partially raised concourse, *Sacbe* 3. This concourse ends in Structure 6F- 15 and 16, which, from surface indications, constitute a ballcourt.

To the north of these two structures, there is a small square platform, Structure 6F-12, which has a long monolithic column next to it - presumably originally situated on top of it. Structure 6F-12 is the focus of a group of structures which contain tenoned block masonry, a partially standing single-roomed building (Structure 6F-9; [figure 6a](#)) with boot-shaped corbel vault stones and a preserved false soffit along one wall (a diagnostic of Terminal Classic construction).

Two poorly preserved tenoned sculptured busts were found in the fall along the western side of Structure 6F-10, the basal substructure for Structure 6F-9. The heads of these busts have goggle-eyes and cheek tattoos as found on sculpture at the Terminal Classic site of Uxmal ([figure 6b](#)).

As noted by Brainerd (1958), the architectonic bas-relief, Yaxuná Monument 1, is situated on the western side of Structure 6F-14. This bas relief shows a figure dancing upon the head of the Waterlily Monster ([figure 8](#)). This monster is an iconographic motif shared by the reliefs collected in the Yaxcaba library (M. Greene Robertson 1986: figure 1; figure 16) with reliefs in the lower Temple of the Jaguars at Chichén Itzá (Tozzer 1957: figure 345).

Finally, it is clear that the ballcourt group closes off the original primary axis of the northern group and focuses access on itself from the south and the center of the site. This closure was achieved not only by construction of the ballcourt group directly on this axis fronting the northern group to the south ([figure 5](#)), but also by the construction of a thick masonry wall along the upper southern margin of the primary substructure, Structure 6F-1, leaving access to the northern group in the form of a narrow stairway out of the ballcourt group fronting the southern face of Structure 6F-4, the pyramid with the Terminal Classic range structure modification.

The indications that the Terminal Classic inhabitants of Yaxuná chose to focus their only original construction on a probable ballcourt are intriguing. The terminus of the inter-site *sacbe* in Cobá is also associated with a ballcourt (Navarrete, Con Uribe and Martinez 1979) in a plaza directly south of the one in which the *sacbe* ends. Further, the Nohoch Mul pyramid, a massive construction, faces south towards the terminus of the *sacbe* and dominates this end as does Structure 5F-3 at the Yaxuná end.

Section 4 Summary of The Survey Results In Yaxuná

The Terminal Classic occupation of Yaxuná, coeval with the Terminal Classic construction of the inter-site *sacbe* from Cobá, appears to consist of selective modification of existing architectural complexes to orient them towards the terminus of the *sacbe*, the construction of small pyramids in the vicinity of this terminus, and the construction of a ballcourt group associated with this terminus by means of a raised causeway. There is evidence that earlier buildings of the Yaxuná center focused on the central acropolis, Structure 5F-1 through 4, were a source of construction material in the form of Early Classic style massive well cut monolithic blocks.

The selective quality of Terminal Classic refurbishment of earlier buildings, combined with evidence of a precipitous cessation of this construction program as witnessed by the scatter of monolithic blocks at the base of the southeastern group, indicates a relatively brief Terminal Classic occupation at Yaxuná. The disjunction between the original designs of architectural complexes in the center and the orientations imposed by the Terminal Classic occupants, supports identification of an hiatus between earlier occupations and the Terminal Classic period use of the site. Bearing in mind the *caveat* supplied by the example of Ikil, the prior major occupation of Yaxuná apparently ended early in the Late Classic period and had its apogee in Late Preclassic through Early Classic times.

Reconnaissance at Yaxuná shows that there is a substantial complex of architecture in Square 5E (c.f. Brainerd's Structures 17 and 18, figure 2), a pyramidal structure in Square 6E (Brainerd's Structure 16), and additional large mound groups in Squares 5F and 6F - directly west and east of the North Group, left to be contour mapped. Furthermore, Brainerd reports column drums from a mound group to the north of the North Group, presumably in Square 6F. None of these mound groups are as substantial as the groups mapped during the 1986 season, but their recording will no doubt add new information to our analysis of the Terminal Classic occupation at Yaxuná. Observation while surveying the sq. km. perimeter lines suggests that there is a discernible drop-off in mound construction away from the major groups and that the overall community, as defined by large, mounded, groups, were probably not much bigger than 1 sq km in any period.

Section 5 Reconnaissance In The Yaxuná Area During 1986

5.1 Introduction

In the course of the 1986 field season, the project staff visited several of the sites represented in the corpus of bas-relief's housed in the library at Yaxcaba (Merle Greene Robertson 1986) in order to evaluate their general size and investigate the contexts of the monuments ([figure 4](#)). Survey was carried out only at the site of Popola.

5.2 Mopila

The site of Mopila is represented by a single monument in the Yaxcaba library, Mopila Monument 1 ([figure 10](#)). The site is 2 km south and west of the town of Yaxcaba and evidently constituted the Pre-Columbian locality of the modern community. There is a ruined sixteenth century church at the site, sections of which are standing and are in reasonably good condition. The church rests upon a raised platform which may be Pre-Columbian. The presence of the church supports the identification of Mopila as the original location of the later community of Yaxcaba, which has a substantially larger seventeenth century church (M.G. Robertson 1986). Only the church was inspected and photographed by the project. The surrounding vicinity is under heavy secondary growth. The church is clearly still revered by local inhabitants, for remains of recent ritual activity in the form of candles and flowers were found on the *in situ* wooden altar, along with a headless carved wooden saint.

Mopila monument 1 was built into the back wall of the church, facing outwards and about three quarters of the way up the wall. This location would place it directly behind the altar. The other masonry of this wall is of standard Colonial *mamposteria* style and no other reused Pre-Columbian blocks were observed. This suggests that the monument was still revered at the time of the Church's construction and that its incorporation into the wall behind the altar was deliberate. Although no standing Pre-Columbian structures were discovered in our brief inspection of the Church area, scattered tenoned blocks of Terminal Classic style were found in field walls running over this platform. This site clearly requires further investigation.

5.3 Kancabdzonot

A single monument from the town of Kancabdzonot ([figure 11](#)), approximately 6 km south and west of Yaxuná, is housed in the Yaxcaba library. This monument

was discovered embedded in a mortared masonry platform retaining wall in a house lot in the community. There was no evidence of superstructure remains on this platform, and the remains of the platform wall have been incorporated into modern house lot walls. Evidently, this wall dates to the Colonial Period. Because this monument was located in the modern town, no further reconnaissance of the vicinity was attempted during the 1986 season. Further investigation of the house lots and mapping of the platform are planned in future seasons.

5.4 Yaxcaba

While the project was working in the Yaxcaba library, a new monument was brought into the collection from the main town *cenote* located less than 100 m away. This monument is a double-headed jaguar throne of crudely carved limestone. The throne has been pierced in the center and the holes continue to each side to open in the mouths of the jaguar heads. Jaguar thrones are standard royal furniture for the Maya and are found at nearby Chichén Itzá. Presumably the monument had been thrown onto the lower edge of the *cenote* in antiquity. The presence of this monument suggests that there was a Pre-Columbian community at the present location of Yaxcaba. Alternatively, the monument was brought in from a proximate site such as Mopila.

5.5 X'telhu

The largest collection of monuments in the Yaxcaba library come from the site of X'telhu (M. G. Robertson 1986), situated in a cattle ranch 9.5 km south and west of Yaxuná. Visual inspection of the structure from which the bas-reliefs were taken showed that it is a range-type structure on a low building platform surmounting a platform without other discernible structures. The sparse debris on the surface of the structure indicates that it was probably not vaulted, and no dear vault stones were observed in the fall. Fragments of *in situ* masonry, including some possibly carved pieces, were observed along the building platform, and eye-witness observations by Jose Aban suggest that the reliefs were built into this platform and into the front wall of the superstructure. The masonry of the platform is of the tenoned block style diagnostic of Terminal Classic construction. This archaeological context supports a Terminal Classic dating for the reliefs.

Reconnaissance of the settlement confirmed the general layout given by Ian Graham in his 1985 sketch map of the site: scattered large, low platforms with remains of foundation braces for perishable superstructures, with tenoned block masonry and some column drums diagnostic of Terminal Classic period architecture. There is a small central group of three pyramids at the site and fragments of masonry mosaic elements were found in the fall of these structures. Present evidence suggests that X'telhu is a small center and community dating to

the Terminal Classic period. A cenote was observed in the settlement zone. The small size of the site is significant in light of the elaborate quality of the bas-reliefs found there. This site is slated for instrument survey during the 1987 season.

5.6 Popola

The site of Popola is located approximately 2 km west of the village of that name on the road between Piste and Yaxuná. The project visited the site twice and made a preliminary theodelite contour map of the main group which contained the bas-reliefs before they were removed to Yaxcaba ([figure 9](#)). The bas-reliefs were positioned as a facade along the front, southern, face of a long, low range-type structure. Fragments of *in situ* bas-reliefs along this face confirmed the eyewitness accounts of Jose Aban as to the architectural context of the reliefs. The structure debris on the surface was sparse, suggesting that the superstructure had a perishable roof. No discernible vault stones were observed in the course of bushing and mapping. There is a preserved plaster floor on this superstructure, exposed in the several looters pits through it. The foundation braces and building platform of the structure used tenoned block masonry, and there are abundant fragments of carved mosaic decoration around the structure, including a medial rectangular section from a superior molding. There is no doubt that this structure conforms to Terminal Classic architectural conventions.

The main structure is part of a group of four structures on top of the sizeable basal substructure (Popola Group 1). Fragments of carved stone were discovered in association with the structure, along the southern margin of this sub-structure, suggesting that this building was also decorated. This building may have straddled the main accessway onto the substructure from the south. In addition to relief fragments, column drums and mosaic elements scattered on the surface of the group, a fragment of a bust in high relief was discovered ([figure 20](#)). Approximately 250 m south of Group 1, there is a modern house compound at Popola. Next to this house there is a Pre Columbian masonry stairway, about 12 m wide and 2.5 m high. This stairway is constructed of finely dressed blocks. Curiously, this stairway gives access to a raised platform that is only slightly larger in basal dimensions than the stairway itself. It would appear to be a grand stairway going nowhere. The stairway was photographed but not cleared or mapped during the 1986 season. Large, low platforms were observed in the vicinity but were not explored. While the extent of the settlement at Popola remains to be investigated, there are no reports of sizeable construction in the vicinity beyond Group 1. This site will be instrument mapped in 1987.

Section 6 The Iconography And Epigraphy Of Terminal Classic monuments in The Yaxuná Area

6.1 Introduction

Although Merle Greene Robertson (1986) suggests that the corpus of monuments found in the Yaxcaba library are probably earlier than the architectonic reliefs at Chichén Itzá, examination of the archaeological contexts for reliefs from X'telhu, Popola and Yaxuná shows that they date from the Terminal Classic period. In light of the ceramic arguments now being offered for a significant overlap between the Terminal Classic Cehpech Ceramic Sphere and the Sotuta Ceramic Sphere associated with Chichén Itzá (Robles and Andrews 1986, Robles 1980, Ball, 1979), there is no reason to eliminate contemporaneity between the architecturally Terminal Classic bas-reliefs of the Yaxuná area and the reliefs found at Chichén Itzá. Merle Green Robertson's argument that the stylistic differences between the reliefs from the Yaxuná area and those found at Chichén Itzá are sufficiently great, given the proximity of Chichén Itzá, to warrant different temporal placement are based upon the notion that stylistic influence from that great city would have necessarily affected nearby artistic conventions.

While in general principle this argument has merit, in practice style is demonstrably not diffusing automatically in ceramic artifacts in the Terminal Classic period. Robles (1980), for example, observed a complete absence of Sotuta diagnostics in the excavated assemblages from Yaxuná. He argues nevertheless that the occupations at Yaxuná and Chichén Itzá are contemporary. His reasoning stems from the fact that Terminal Classic Cobá, also lacking Sotuta diagnostics is contemporary with Chichén Itzá, and the Terminal Classic occupation at Yaxuná is linked to that city by the great *sacbe*. In light of the preliminary evidence described from the settlement survey at Yaxuná in sections above, the Terminal Classic occupation at Yaxuná was coeval with the last major building period at Cobá and hence contemporary with Chichén Itzá. To be sure, this is a hypothesis to be further tested at Yaxuná; but it requires an examination of the local corpus of art found in the vicinity from this vantage.

6.2 Style

Merle Greene Robertson (1986) makes a sound case for identifying a local style represented in the Yaxcaba library collection. The presence of a highly local style here is not surprising, for the northern lowlands contain numerous such local artistic traditions in the Later Classic and Terminal Classic periods (Proskouriakoff, 1950). Key diagnostics of this style include the full presentation of toes on profile figures, almond-shaped eyes, virtual absence of necks between

the heads and shoulders, and disproportionately large heads relative to bodies. The faces of figures lack personal detail, but generally adhere to a conventional display with prominent chins and square faces. Actually, there are a number of modern Maya farmers in the area who look exactly like this conventional rendering. Poses are generally rigid and hands are sometimes shown raised perpendicular to the arms. Full frontal display is rare relative to profile presentation of individuals. Composition is focused on processional scenes with figures all facing the same direction. Even in a more static scene of seated individuals, such as X'telhu Panel B (M.G. Robertson 1986: figures 5 and 6; figure 17), the individuals are displayed in profile facing the same direction. Finally, there are floating images and icons in the upper zone of several reliefs. Carving is shallow and there is extensive use of incision for detail. All of the known examples of this art are architectonic pieces, left rough on the backsides and roughly beveled on the sides for insertion into walls. As Merle Greene Robertson (1986) notes, this style is quite distinct from any known from the site of Chichén Itzá, except for the fact that it is architectonic. One compositional correspondence with Chichén Itzá is the presence of an elaborate base-line on X'telhu Panel A (M.G. Robertson 1986: figures 1 and 2), seen, for example, on the piers in the Lower Temple of the Jaguars.

6.3 The Iconography of basic regalia: the Puuc sites

Although there are some significantly distinctive features in the iconography of this local style, as discussed below, there are numerous correspondences between the regalia worn by figures and other elements in compositions with art found at Puuc-related sites, particularly with images of individuals carrying instruments of war such as spears and shields, or participating in war-related activities.

Primary diagnostics of the regalia in this style ([figures 16](#), [17](#) and [18](#)) include wrapped and knotted leggings and forearm bands; long, segmented and tasseled loin cloth ends in front and back; broad, tight girdles, sometimes with oval rattles depending from them and usually accompanied by flayed skin aprons draped down the back of one thigh; beaded shawls; and elaborate polymorphic helmets. The most elaborate regalia are found on the principal individual of X'telhu Panel A (M.G. Robertson 1986: figures 1 and 2). Here the girdle is made of the woven mat design and the loin cloth tassel is embroidered. This individual wears a long depending pendant suspended over the groin area. The pendant appears to be what Merle Greene Robertson has termed the "pineapple" helmet, a segmented helmet with feather panache, suspended upside-down. This figure also wears a tight-fitting helmet. In Merle Greene Robertson's line drawing, this helmet is vertical in front and has scrollwork on it. Inspection of the piece, of photographs, and of Merle Greene Robertson's rubbing (1986: figure 1), suggests that the helmet is curved back over the head and is a polymorph decorating the basic "pineapple" shape.

The regalia worn by figures on the bas-reliefs found in the sites surrounding Yaxuná correspond to a number of reported images from the Puuc region. On the painted murals of the Upper Register on the north wall of building C at Chacmultun (Banera R. 1980: figure 6) 12 of the warrior figures are wearing the tight-fitting girdles found on figures in the Yaxcaba corpus. Of these examples, 6 are definitely wearing the long loin-cloth tassels as well. An additional 9 figures in this battle scene are also wearing the long loin-cloth tassel, but are not wearing the girdles. A possibly significant variation in the regalia here is the fact that most of the figures have the long tassel only at the back; the front shows a short, knotted tassel.

The tight, broad girdle is also worn by principal figures in battle and sacrifice scenes painted at the site of Mulchic (Banera R. 1980: figure 2, far right; figure 3, far right). In these instances, the principal figures also wear the banded and knotted leggings and forearm raiment characteristic of figures on the reliefs housed at Yaxcaba, and two of the figures (Barrera R. 1980: figure 3) wear the shawls.

At the site of Kabah, in Structure 2A3 (Pollock 1980: figures 333 and 334), there are two sculpted doorjambs, which show principals dominating kneeling figures. The subordinate figures both wear the tight girdle and long loin-cloth tassels, in addition to short-knotted tassels in front. The dominating individuals wear banded broad and tight-fitting girdles with long tassels at the back and short, knotted tassels in front as in the case of the Chacmultun mural. These principal figures also wear the banded and knotted leggings; however, their wristlets are segmented rather than banded. One of the principal individuals (Pollock 1980: figure 333) wears a long-lipped polymorphic helmet with elaborate feather panaches; the other principal individual wears a rather square rendering of the "pineapple" helmet with characteristic feather panache. The scenes are clearly confrontational and the subordinate individuals are handing the principals weapons.

Confrontational scenes on sculptured jambs in Structure 2C6 at Kabah (Pollock 1980: figures 372 and 373) also show correspondences in regalia to the Yaxcaba corpus. In the upper registers of these jambs, one of the principal individuals is wearing the segmented "pineapple" helmet with feather panache, while the other is wearing a close-fitting polymorphic helmet resembling that worn by the principal figure on X'telhu Panel A. Several individuals on these jambs wear the tight-fitting girdle and long loin-cloth tassel at the back, with shorter and more elaborate tassels at the front. Also at Kabah, Altar 8 (Pollock 1980: figure 381) shows two principal individuals capturing or preparing to sacrifice two subordinate individuals. The principal individuals wear the tight fitting girdles with long tassels at the front, and the leg and armbands characteristic of the Yaxcaba corpus. One of these individuals wears the short shawl.

At Oxkintok, Stela 21 (Pollock 1980: figure 547) shows a warrior in the central of three panels carrying a stabbing spear and square shield. This individual is wearing the tight girdle, shown as banded in this case, with multiple, long back tassels on the loin cloth. He is also wearing the banded and knotted forearm gear and the "pineapple" helmet. The figure in the lowermost panel is subordinating a secondary individual and he is wearing the tight-fitting girdle and the segmented shawl.

At the site of Halal, a sculptured door jamb reported by Pollock (1980: figure 925) shows a single individual carrying a knife blade in one hand and a pouch in the other. He is wearing the tight-fitting girdle and long, segmented front tassel, and he is wearing the banded and knotted leggings. Additionally, he is wearing the short beaded shawl and a polymorphic long-lipped mask with feather panache.

This brief and cursory review of the published examples of regalia found on images from Puuc-related sites shows that the regalia on the bas-reliefs from the Yaxuná area is well within the documented range in many respects. The association of the particular gear discussed here, the girdle, the leggings and forearm bands, with battle scenes, capture, sacrifice and subordination scenes, is intriguing. Several of the bas-reliefs from the Yaxuná area, particularly X'telhu Panels C and D, Popola Monuments 1 and 2 ([figures 19](#) and [20](#)), show domination scenes in processions. It is possible that these particular forms of attire were used for protection in warfare.

6.4 The Iconography of basic regalia: Chichén Itzá

Merle Greene Robertson (1986) notes some correspondences in regalia between the reliefs housed at Yaxcaba and those found at Chichén Itzá. She is of the opinion that these correspondences are relatively slight given the proximity of the sites. However, an examination of figures from Chichén Itzá shows that there are some systematic and well represented parallels in the regalia discussed above.

In the Lower Temple of the Jaguars (Structure 2D1), there are a number of personages wearing the basic regalia. For example, the individual at Row A7 (Tozzer 1957: figure 217) wears the banded and knotted leggings, the banded forearm apparel, the broad girdle, with rattles attached as in the case of the X'telhu individuals and with the long back tassel, and the short shawl. This individual carries a stabbing spear and a flexible square shield, like the principal figure in X'telhu Panel A. Two other Figures by Tozzer from Row A (1957: figures 612, and 613) wear the banded leggings and the short shawl. The girdles on these individuals are decorated rather than being plain bands. They also carry stabbing spears, and one carries the square shield while the other carries a round shield. Numerous other figures in Row A wear the leggings and shawl and carry stabbing spears and square shields, or round shields (e.g. Tozzer 1957: figures 633, 636, 637 and 638). The individual in Tozzer's figure 637 definitely is

wearing the tight girdle and long back tassel. Further examples of the basic regalia are found in Tozzer's figures 646 and 647, more individuals from Row A of the Lower Temple of the Jaguars. These wear the tight girdle with long back tassel and the leggings. In figure 646, the individual has a long front tassel, while in figure 647, the individual has the short knotted front tassel as in some examples from the Puuc region.

Elsewhere at Chichén Itzá, on Column 4E of the Temple of the Chac Mool (Tozzer 1957: figure 649) an individual carrying a knife is wearing the banded leggings, the tight broad girdle, here elaborated knotted as in the case of the principal figure on Panel A of X'telhu, knotted forearm bands and the short shawl. On Column 1W of the Northeast Colonnade (Structure 3E1; Tozzer 1957: figure 663), the individual wears the leggings, the broad girdle with attached rattles, the long back tassel and short knotted front tassel, and the short shawl.

Although many other kinds of regalia occur at Chichén Itzá, it is clear that the basic elements found conventionally displayed in the local style surrounding Yaxuná also occur on figures at Chichén Itzá, and in several cases in the same overall combination. As in the case of the Puuc examples described above, there is a suggestive association with implements of war, particularly with the stabbing spear and shields. Although these iconographic correspondences in themselves are not sufficient to demonstrate contemporaneity between the relief carvings of the local style surrounding Yaxuná and the reliefs at Chichén Itzá, they are at least commensurate with such an hypothesis.

6.5 Special Regalia of the local style

The most distinctive conventional regalia on the reliefs are the large, polymorphic helmets worn by individuals on panels from X'telhu, Popola, Mopila and Kancabdzonot. While the principal of a long-lipped polymorphic helmet is well represented in the Puuc region (Pollock 1980), and polymorphic masks are also found at Chichén Itzá, the helmet masks found in the vicinity of Yaxuná are highly standard, different, and a useful diagnostic of the local style. These masks are well described iconographically by Merle Greene Robertson (1986). Salient iconographic analysis of the masks is presented in the sections below on monuments from Mopila and Kancabdzonot.

The "pineapple" helmet discussed in sections above is a particularly interesting element. Although it does occur worn as a helmet by individuals in the reported reliefs, it also "floats" as a detached emblem in at least two cases: X'telhu Panel B (M.G. Robertson 1986: figure 5) and X'telhu Panel C (M.G. Robertson 1986: figure 9; figure 18). This usage suggests that the element conveys symbolic meaning independent of its context. A similar helmet form, segmented but lacking the feather panache, occurs as a glyph in Late Classic lintel 2 at Piedras Negras (Schele and Miller 1986:148). There, the actual helmet as worn by

individuals on the lintel carries the feather panache. The glyphic helmet follows an "ahau-in-hand" verb, meaning usually the display of God K. A serpent footed figure which might be this deity floats above the scene on X'telhu Panel A. Schele and Miller suggest that this helmet glyph represents the donning of battle gear by young men shown in the scene. The helmet glyph also occurs at Palenque in the Temple of the Inscriptions. Schele (1986:98-99), glosses this as the drum major helmet of kingship at the site, connoting "he ruled". Whatever the significance, the disembodied presentation of the helmet connotes a glyphic usage on the X'telhu panels. This is important because these particular reliefs are otherwise devoid of glyphic texts. As discussed in following sections, there are glyphic texts on other reliefs associated with the local style surrounding Yaxuná.

Popola Monument 2 ([figure 20](#)) shows a secondary processing figure in front of a larger and dominant figure who is wearing one of the characteristic polymorphic masks of this style. This secondary figure is evidently not a captive, for like the principal figure he is carrying a baton. Furthermore, there are clearly subordinate supplicant figures at the feet of both individuals, an iconographic signal to read the second processing individual as like in kind to the first one. This smaller processing individual wears a helmet form characteristic of Chichén Itzá, namely, the flat-topped segmented round helmet with chopped feather panache. There is a bifurcate panache of feathers attached to the front of this helmet strongly resembling the characteristic "bird" attached to this helmet in examples from Chichén Itzá. There is also a flap depending from this helmet in front of the ear, as in the Chichén Itzá cases. In light of the frequency and diagnostic quality of this helmet at Chichén Itzá, and the equally diagnostic quality of the polymorphic mask worn by the other processing individual in the local style, their direct association on a single bas-relief at a site nearly equidistant from Chichén Itzá and Yaxuná is promising support for the hypothesized contemporaneity of these styles. Finally, there is a serpent footed figure floating above the scene here as in the case of X'telhu Panels B and C, and Popola Monument 1.

One last helmet form worth mentioning was discovered on a full-face image in high relief on a tenoned block at the site of Popola ([figure 21](#)). This helmet is peaked at the front, with narrower side bands. The surface of the peak is decorated with horizontal lines. This is a distinctive helmet design particularly associated with Chichén Itzá (e.g. Tozzer 1957: figures 534 and 538) and not otherwise represented in sites surrounding Yaxuná.

An interesting feature of X'telhu Panels C and D is the fact that the subordinate individuals in the procession are carrying feline skins draped over their backs, with the head downwards and front paws carried over the shoulders. One of the individuals in Row A of the Lower Temple of the Jaguars wears such a skin knotted around his waist (the figure to the right of the individual given in Tozzer's figure 217.) Another individual in Row A (Tozzer 1957: figure 628), wears a feline skin draped over his shoulders as in the case of the X'telhu figures, but he is wearing a feline head helmet, so the skin itself is probably headless. On one of

the murals from Mulchic (Banera R. 1980: figure 3), a frontally depicted personage, probably the principle focus of the mural, is wearing a feline skin with clawed paws depending in a fashion suggesting that the skin is tied around the waist. In light of these correspondences, it seems likely that the processing individuals on the X'telhu panels are not involved in a jaguar hunt as such. Rather, they are carrying paraphernalia associated with high status and with war as is generally the case in Maya jaguar iconography (Freidel, 1986). The way in which they carry the skins would be commensurate with the presentation of tribute, a theme found in the Lower Temple of the Jaguars procession (Miller, 1986).

While the processing figure on X'telhu Panels C and D carry distinctive deer antlers, the hafted axe carried by the principal figure on Popola Monument 1, the knife or baton carried by the secondary processing figure on Popola Monument 2, and the feathered baton carried by the principal figure on Popola Monument 2 all have correspondences at Chichén Itzá and in the Puuc region.

6.6 Summary of the Iconography of regalia

The iconography of the local style found in sites surrounding Yaxuná is rich and there is much more potential for interpretation than offered in the sections above. The brief survey offered here does suggest that while the style is distinctive, the iconography has numerous correspondences both with the reliefs from the Puuc area and with reliefs found at Chichén Itzá. The correspondences suggest a focus on regalia associated with war: battle, capture, sacrifice and tribute procession scenes. The degree to which this association merely expresses the prevailing themes of art in the Terminal Classic period, as opposed to a particular conventional battle gear, cannot be established with certainty. Be that as it may, the correspondences are sufficient to support the hypothesis that these styles are coeval and iconographically interactive. The monuments from Popola are particularly telling in this regard.

6.7 Iconographic Composition

In addition to the procession scenes involving captives or subordinate individuals, the local style has scenes showing two individuals facing one another (X'telhu Panel E, M.G. Robertson" 1986: figure 14), scenes showing seated individuals (*ibid.* Panel B), and scenes showing a single full-frontal, individual (Popola, Monument 4 [figure 22](#)).

Two other important scenes occur in the local style which are important, the presentation of a lord standing or dancing upon the Waterlily Monster, as seen on X'telhu Panel A and on Yaxuná Monument 1; and a seated full- frontal lord as seen on Mopila Monument 1. Because Mopila Monument 1 and Kancabdzonot

Monument 1 also have hieroglyphic inscriptions, they were studied and recorded particularly intensively by the project and are discussed in the following sections. Yaxuná Monument 1 documents the presence of the local style at this large and presumably capital site of the region and hence is also subject to particular attention. Like Panel A at X'telhu, it shows a lord surmounting the Waterlily Monster. The following sections detail Monuments 1 from Mopila, Kancabdzonot, and Yaxuná.

Section 7 Mopila Monument 1

7.1 Introduction

The site of Mopila is situated two kilometers to the south and west of the town of Yaxcaba, which is about 18 km west of the site of Yaxuná ([figure 4](#)). The relief ([figure 10](#)) is smaller than those described by Greene Robertson from X'telhu and Popola, the carved surface measures only 35 by 35 cm. The stone was originally found set into the back wall of the 16th century church at Mopila, the center of the local community before it was removed to the present location of Yaxcaba. The location of the stone is commensurate with its likely importance to the Contact Period community: it is situated more than half way up the wall, directly behind the upper altar of the church, set with its carved surface facing outwards.

The single image on the stone has a circular excised area directly over the groin, the dimensions of which are appropriate to an iron ore mirror, and it is possible that this was an oracle idol as described in the Contact Period Annals of the Cakchiquels (Brinton 1885). In any case, the placement of the stone no doubt accounts for its good condition.

7.2 Pose and Dress

The image is that of a seated individual wearing a mask--the merging of the head into the shoulders suggests this--a beaded or tasseled short cape, wristlets and anklets, and a double-tasseled loincloth drawn through a rectilinear girdle or belt. The individual holds his right hand up over his chest, and holds his left hand out in a gesture of offering. He is sitting cross-legged, the position so associated with accession among the Maya that a glyphic verb for that event is the logograph of a sitting body (Schele 1982). He is sitting upon a line of *pop* or *mat* signs, symbols of royal authority. Intriguingly, the sign directly under the individual is not *pop* but a variant of *kin* which occurs in the text of Kancabdzonot Monument 1 as discussed below. The association of the sun, *kin*, with royal power is general. However, it is also becoming evident in the southern lowlands that *Ah Kin*, he of the sun, is a title of official rank (Schele and Miller 1986, Chapter 3).

There are several features of this costume which, although not unusual for Maya dress, correspond well to the costuming found on individuals of rank in the reliefs from X'telhu and Popola. Specifically, the use of the short beaded, cape is found on the principal personage "on X'telhu panel C (Greene Robertson 1986: fig. 9), on the second ranking individual on X'telhu panel B (Greene Robertson 1986: fig. 6), and finally, on the principal figure of X'telhu panel A (Greene Robertson 1986: fig. 2) which is surely an individual of very high status. The wristlets of the individual on Mopila monument 1 consist of two tight strips, and the anklets are likewise two tight strips.

The personages of rank on X'telhu panels A, C, and D all wear tightly bound anklets, albeit higher and of more numerous strips than found on the Mopila relief. Only two of these individuals wear comparable wristlets: the main personage on panel A and the individual to his immediate left (Greene Robertson 1986: fig. 1). These are certainly high status personages. The long-tasseled loincloth worn by the Mopila individual corresponds to the long-tasseled loincloths worn by the persons on the X'telhu and Popola reliefs. Although the use of long loin-cloth is not particularly diagnostic of any Maya style, the extension of the tassels on the Mopila figure suggests that this element of dress was important in the image and meant to correspond to a recognizable costume.

A similarly generic quality of the other particular elements renders the correspondence between the Mopila depiction and those of the other reliefs from nearby site a matter of general resemblance. Taken in the aggregate, however, these correspondences show that it is reasonable to hypothesize that the Mopila stone is an expression of the local style being defined in this region. Finally, it is worth noting that other principal figures in the reliefs have three digits on their hands or feet, as expressed in the Mopila figure.

7.3 The Mask

There are elements of the polymorphic mask worn by the personage which correspond to the masks depicted on the X'telhu and Popola reliefs. In particular, the Mopila mask shows a very large and prominent 'brow' element over the eye. This element is bifurcate, but it is clearly a profile expression of a diagnostic element found in the X'telhu reliefs: a trifurcate brow as seen on the base line masks of Panel A, and on the helmet masks worn by ranking personages of reliefs C and D.

As in those instances, the eye of the mask is clearly rectilinear rather than round. Although that element might seem minor, in fact the shape of the eye of these masks contrast dearly with the oval and heavily lidded eye shape associated with the Boa polymorphic entity discussed below.

The mask has a segmented upper jaw with distinct nostrils above. Although the segmented snout has its best parallel in a baseline mask at Yaxuná, the X'telhu and Popola helmet masks also show the same clear division of snout and nostrils.

The Mopila mask contrasts with those found at X'telhu and Popola in that this polymorph is surmounted by a stylized long-beaked bird carrying a trifurcate sign above its beak. The trifurcate sign, although rectilinear and not personified, is in the appropriate location relative to the helmet to be a variant form of the Jester God diadem, the pervasive symbol of royal authority.

The iconography of the mask worn by the Mopila figure strengthens the interpretation of this relief as part of the local style identified by Merle Greene Robertson (1986) with the site of X'telhu. In particular, the large scrolled brow and square eye are consistent features of helmet masks found in the corpus, and the segmented snout is a common feature. The association of the Mopila relief with the rest of the Yaxcaba corpus is important, for while Greene Robertson (1986:109) observes that there are no texts on the X'telhu panels, the Mopila relief does have a text, and interpretation of this text can perhaps eventually help elucidate the imagery of the corpus.

7.4 The Text

The glyphs of the text are arranged into two columns, column A to the individual's right, column B to his left.

Glyph A1 is certainly a date, the number four followed by a day name. As pointed out to us by Linda Schele (personal communication 1986), when such a date is followed by kin in the northern Maya lowlands, as it is in this case, it is a reference to the 260 day calendar. She has suggested the possibility that the day name is *muluc* (T515?) A2 is the *kin* glyph followed by the phonetic suffix *ni*, or T544:116.

A3, we suggest, is the verb, a variant of the T60:713 accession verb identified by Schele and Miller (1983:37, and figs. 15q, r) as the hand grasping the bundle containing the bright mirror. The ulterior of the posited T617a grapheme does not contain the diagnostic lines. Nevertheless, it is clearly a circle infixed on the knot, lacking the incised folds of a plain knot. The major deviation of this verb from expected form is the direction of the hand, T60. This example is the left hand grasping to the left, while the normal presentation is the right hand grasping to the right--viewer's perspective. We will try to show that this is a deliberate deviation. In a second and related example of this verb on Kancabdzonot Monument 1, discussed below, the T60 grapheme is the normal, right, hand. In the Mopila Monument 1 depiction, the personage is holding out his left hand directly below the final glyph in the text, B3, and this is the title to which he is

acceding in this sentence. A minor deviation of the T60 grapheme is the elongated thumb wrapping around the bundle, literally displaying the act of grasping. While there are such variations from the expected, the hand does have the proper 'jewel' on the back.

A4 is the number 17 followed by a carefully rendered animal head. We suggest that it is a rabbit, *t'ul*, but it could be a different animal. In any case, it is syntactically in the correct place, as a subject, to be a personal name. Given the lowland Mayan practice of naming individuals with numbers, e.g. 18 Rabbit of Copan, we suggest that A4 is the personal name of the depicted lord, 17 Rabbit in this case, or *Uclahunt'ul*. Below this name is a grapheme, which appears to be an affix and which presumably is a phonetic compliment. Naturally we would like it to be a *vI* but we have no clear case to that effect.

At the top of the right-hand column of glyphs, B1 is another title in the subject composed of two graphemes followed by the number 2. The first grapheme is a small-seated god figure with a prominent square eye, round ear-plug and open mouth. This figure is bundled against the back of a head which wears a tumpline around its forehead. The composition occurs iconographically on Monument 2 of Popola ([figure 20](#)), where one of the reliefs originally placed there and now housed in Yaxcaba shows a processing personage wearing a similarly bundled figure on his back. The Popola figure is human. There is a well-established iconographic complex in the Classic southern lowland corpus of small full figures born inside of elaborate back-rack assemblages, as in the Holmul dancer images. This title may be an allusion to the complex, although the salient deities in that case are the Waterlily Jaguar and *Chac-Xib-Chac* (Schele and Miller 1986:77). In any case, the presence of this title helps to link the Mopila monument to an iconographic occurrence in the Yaxcaba corpus.

B2 is composed of two glyphs. The first is a variant of God C, a symbol for blood (Stuart, in press), which in this case would gloss "the blood of . . .", analogous to the use of the obsidian blood-letter (Schele 1985:35) as a parentage statement. The second glyph is the head of a particular polymorph which has a characteristic rectilinear segmented crest. As discussed by Merle Greene Robertson (1986), this creature occurs as the baseline frame of X'telhu panel D (Greene Robertson 1986:fig. 10), and in another fragment from the same site (*ibid* fig. 15). In the latter case, the polymorph again occurs in the baseline, for the double line above it is the same basal framing element that occurs on X'telhu panel A (*ditto* figs. 1 and 2). Merle Greene Robertson (1986: 100) suggests that this creature displays strong Boa Constrictor features and this seems reasonable. We will term this image the Boa polymorph. At first sight, this glyphic compound seemed to be asserting that 17 Rabbit was the blood of a supernatural displayed also at X'telhu. As described below in relation to the Kancabdzonot monument, we now believe that it is the personal title of another historical personage.

B3, the final glyph in the column, is iconographically the title of particular focus, for it rests directly above 17 Rabbit's out-stretched hand. This consists of T25, phonetic *ca*, and T683, phonetic *ah*, yielding *cah*. *Cah* is a identified variant of *Cahal*, an important title recently discussed by David Stuart (1983, cited in Schele and Miller 1986:146, footnote 3). The *cah* variant of this title is discussed, for example, by Linda Schele (1985:40) with regard to Lady Knot-Skull on Stelae 1 and 2 of Bonampak. It is also possible that the Inverted *ahau* phonetic *al* existed in the eroded basal section of the glyph block. The *Cah* variant is sufficient to be surprising and extraordinary. As Schele and Miller surmise (1986:137): "*Cahals* were regional governors, subject to a king ...".

7.5 Discussion of the Cahal title

The implication here is that 17 Rabbit was subject to such a higher authority. There are several intriguing problems, however, in dealing with this possibility. Firstly, the *Cahal* or *Cah* title has been discovered heretofore only in the Western Rivers district of the Maya lowlands. Its presence in the central northern lowlands suggests some important links to the southern lowlands in Terminal Classic times, and to the Western Rivers district in particular (c.f. Andrews V 1974). Secondly, the only epigraphically established *Ahaus* in the vicinity are at Chichén Itzá to the north and east, in the Puuc region to the south and west, and at Cobá, a substantial distance to the east. Stylistically, none of these capitals are closely connected to the Yaxcaba corpus (Merle Green Robertson 1986: 109) although on iconographic grounds a case can be made for contemporaneity.

A cursory review of the textual data from the northern lowlands shows the presence of the *Cahal* title at one Puuc-related site: Xcalumkin (Pollock 1980: 418-456; Figure 22). This site has a considerable number of hieroglyphic texts, and one longcount date which has been deciphered as 744 A.D. and with other suggested dates in the latter half of the eight century (Pollock 1980:420). The *Cahal* title occurs in a text which spans the doorway of the Middle Building of the Hieroglyphic Group, a group of three multi-roomed masonry superstructures (Pollock 1980: figures 735 and 743). The title carries the *u* suffix as in examples from the Western Rivers region. I have not been able to gloss the sentence in which this title occurs. The *Cahal* title in this instance is inverted, possibly the result of resetting of the stone.

Several other examples of an interesting potential variant of the *Cahal* title occur in the South Building of the Hieroglyphic Group at Xcalumkin. The main texts occur on the medial walls of this tandem-plan structure flanking the doorway into the southern backroom, but other texts are found on the columns of the front, north-facing, doorway and on the northern front walls to either side of the doorway. The key text is given on the eastern medial wall ([figure 23](#)). This brief sentence replicates the general form of the texts found on the Mopila and Kancabdzonot monuments. The first glyph is the hand grasping the mirror

accession verb, T.713.617 with verbal affix (Schele and Miller 1983:39). Following this accession verb are three, which appear to constitute the subject. The first of these glyphs is a title found in other texts at this site and possibility associated with several individuals. The second of these glyphs appears to be the personal name of the protagonist of the sentence and the patron of the building, for this name is repeated in the main text framing the medial doorway. The final title in this sentence is evidently *Cahal* rendered as T.25.25, the *Cah* given fully as the double comb, suffixed with *Ah* and *vl*. The main text framing the doorway also ends in the same rendering of the *Cahal* title. Finally, the columns of the front doorway contain the same rendering of the *Cahal* title, associated with other titles included in the text framing the medial doorway. The fact that the *Cahal* title is the final one given on two of the major texts in this building, and that it is repeated on a column of the front doorway suggests that it was of particular importance to the individual who commissioned the building. It is evidently the title to which the individual is acceding in the text on the panel which presumably portrays him as a seated lord. The composition of his scene replicates in general pose that given in the Mopila relief, which is also a relatively small and isolated image.

That the *Cahal* title was important at Xcalumkin is suggested not only by the construction of a rather elaborate building to celebrate an individual's accession to it, but by the presence of the title in texts elsewhere at the site. The double comb variant of the title occurs on one of the sculptured columns from the Middle Building of the Hieroglyphic Group (Pollock 1980: figure 740) in addition to the single comb variant found in the text framing the medial doorway mentioned above. The single comb variant of the title also occurs on a doorjamb in the Initial Series building at this site (Pollock 1980: figure 714 b).

In the case of at least one major Puuc site, then, the *Cahal* title celebrated on Mopila Monument 1 is of principal importance. This suggests that more systematic research in texts from Puuc-related sites might reveal more examples of this title. In light of the Puuc affinities in architecture from Yaxuná, the Puuc area is as likely a source of inspiration for the use of the *Cahal* title as the southern lowlands.

In terms of settlement patterns and the distribution of the reliefs in the local style represented in the Yaxcaba corpus, the logical place to look for an *ahau* is at Yaxuná. Unfortunately, while two reliefs are known from Yaxuná which are likely contemporary with the Yaxcaba corpus, the glyphs on them are badly eroded or completely defaced. There is reason to remain optimistic, however, as much of the outlying settlement zone at Yaxuná remains to be systematically investigated. The established contexts for the reliefs at Popola and X'telhu are small range type structures. This architectural type is definitely present at Yaxuná.

Section 8 Kancabdzonot Monument 1

8.1 Introduction

There are some epigraphic reasons to believe that the Yaxcaba corpus docs indeed register a local political and religious expression, as suggested by Merle Greene Robertson (1986:87). Examination of a relief fragment from the town of Kancabdzonot, 13 km to the southeast of Yaxcaba and between the sites of X'telhu and Yaxuná, revealed a second accession statement that we believe is connected to the one described on Mopila Monument 1.

Kancabdzonot Monument 1 ([figure 11](#)) is illustrated in Greene Robertson (1986, fig.19) without commentary. This fragment of a larger bas relief measures roughly 50 by 50 cm. on its carved surface and prior to its removal to Yaxcaba it was incorporated into the mortared masonry wall of a terrace in a house lot of the town of Kancabdzonot. This terrace wall was inspected by the authors and appears to be a Colonial Period construction with no evidence of an associated superstructure at this time. Given that this fragment encompasses only the uppermost section of the original relief surface, and in light of the fact that it is approximately 50 cm thick, it seems very likely that the Pre-Columbian structure housing the relief was within the limits of the modern town.

8.2 The Image

The preserved section of the relief shows a polymorphic helmet, presumably worn by a personage below, framed above by a line of glyphs that runs down in front of the helmet and to the viewer's right. Above the line of glyphs there are two fragmentary *kan* crosses floating. There is no doubt in this case that the polymorph is a helmet and not a baseline motif. The compositional presence and location of the glyphic text are appropriate to the upper sector of a monument. This is significant, for iconographically the image of the helmet is the same Boa Constrictor polymorph discussed by Merle Greene Robertson (1986:100) as occurring in the baseline on Panel D at X'telhu. The same entity occurs in another baseline fragment from X'telhu (*ibid.*, fig.15). The particular corresponding details include the heavy lidded oval eye, the square snout, the back-curving multiple teeth, and the rectilinear segmented crest.

Additional elements decorate the Kancabdzonot helmet which are not found on the baseline Boas from X'telhu, but which may connect it iconographically with the helmet on the Mopila bas relief and with the helmets worn by principal individuals on the X'telhu and Popola monuments. All of these helmets display feather panache's. In the case of the Mopila crest, it is clearly a long-beaked bird; although the Kancabdzonot panache is open to alternative interpretation, it appears to also show a bird's head, wing, and claw, rendered in feathers.

An interesting contrast between the segmented crests of the baseline polymorphs and the Kancabdzonot helmet is that the X'telhu images consistently have three segments while the Kancabdzonot helmet has five. This modification may be another adaptation of this image to the helmet position, for the X'telhu and Popola helmets display multiple rectilinear elements along their edges which anchor the feather panache's.

Behind the feathered panache on the Kancabdzonot helmet, there is a bifurcate scroll with three dots along the front. The helmets of principals on X'telhu panel D and on Popola panel 1 (Greene Robertson 1986: figs. 12 and 16) carry large rectilinear singular scrolls also decorated with dots. Iconographically, the two kinds of dotted scrolls are members of a single category of sacred substance (Freidel 1985) and serve to connect these helmets within the local style.

Finally, the X'telhu and Popola helmets, like the Kancabdzonot helmet, display long tubular nose-plugs. The correspondence between the helmet on Popola Panel 1 and Kancabdzonot Monument 1 is particularly striking in this regard.

It would seem, then that the helmet on the Kancabdzonot monument is primarily the Boa polymorph found in baseline representations at X'telhu. Removed to the position of helmet, this polymorph has been appropriately modified with elements found on helmet polymorphs in other representations from the local area. The question arises: why has this baseline polymorph been used as a helmet? The answer is that the Kancabdzonot individual has taken the Boa polymorph as his personal title and, in an unsurprising fashion for Maya iconography, he is wearing this title as a helmet.

8.3 The Text

The glyphs on Kancabdzonot monument 1 are designated A1, the first glyph in the text, and B1, B2, and B3 in the second column which continues the text down the viewer's right-hand side. Glyph A1 is a date, the number 9 followed by a problematic day name which might be *Ik*. Glyph B1 is a variant form of kin prefixed with T116 *ni*, which here, as in the case of Mopila Monument 1, designates the date as being in the 260 day sacred calendar. Glyph B2 consists of the T617a grapheme identified by Jeffrey Miller as a mirror, *nen* (Schele and Miller 1983:37; fig. 15), surmounting a variant of T713a, a hand, to form the hand grasping the mirror accession verb. Unlike the Mopila example of this verb, the mirror is not infixed in T60, the bundle knot; but like the Mopila example, this variant of T713a is three fingered. The hand has the fingers to the viewer's right, as is expectable in this grapheme. Sections of both the palm and the digits are damaged, but sufficiently preserved to confirm the grapheme given both direct association with T617a and syntactical placement in the sentence-which clearly parallels the sentence on the Mopila monument.

Following the accession verb, glyph B3 shows a head with an oval eye and the characteristic rectilinear segmented crest of the Boa polymorph. Here as in glyph B2 on the Mopila monument and in the depictions of this polymorph from X'telhu, there are three segments in the crest. Syntactically, this glyph should be a subject; and given the parallels with the Mopila text, this glyph should be the personal title of the protagonist who is portrayed on the relief. We suggest, then, that this text relates the accession of an individual, whom we term Boa Monster (Boa polymorph sounds entirely too technical for a personal name), to some unknown status.

What is reasonably certain is that this Boa polymorph title is the same as the one 17 Rabbit of Mopila is calling himself 'the (god C) blood of' in glyph B2 of his text. Given the proximity of Mopila and Kancabdzonot; the stylistic and iconographic arguments for the inclusion of these reliefs in a single local style associated with the Terminal Classic period, we hypothesize that Boa Monster of Kancabdzonot is a close and politically important relative of 17 Rabbit of Mopila. From the patterns of title inheritance now emerging in the Western Rivers district of the southern lowlands (Schele and Miller 1986, chapter 3), and the parallels in the sentences on the two monuments under consideration, we predict that if more of Kancabdzonot Monument 1 is found that it will show Boa Monster acceding to the title of *Cah* or *Cahal* as in the case of 17 Rabbit.

Section 9 Conclusions On Monuments With Texts

Although Merle Greene Robertson (1986:109) observes that there are no hieroglyphic texts associated with the X'telhu panels known to date, there are texts associated with the local style to which they belong. This is encouraging for several reasons. Firstly, it leaves open the possibility of discovering texts with Long Count dates. The presence of such dates would help settle the matter of when this local style developed. Secondly, the proposed contents of the two texts discussed here reflect one of the functions of the bas-reliefs, namely to celebrate accession events. In this respect, the artistic interests of the local elite are commensurate with those of other Maya political authorities. Thirdly, the *Cah* title to which 17 Rabbit accedes implies the existence of a political hierarchy in the local area, and the syntactical identity of his text and that of Boa Monster bolsters the prospect of an integrated polity incorporating the sites participating in the local style.

Section 10 Yaxuná Monument 1

10.1 Introduction

Brainerd (1958:13) discovered Yaxuná Monument 1 *in situ* in the wall of a small structure facing south at the edge of the Ballcourt group ([figure 13](#)). The context as described by Brainerd shows that this relief, like those from X'telhu and Popola, was a component in a facade rather than a doorjamb. When the present project found the monument, it had been dislocated from the wall and was lying face up at the base of it. Examination of the fall debris of the wall revealed the presence of tenoned block masonry of the kind characteristic of Terminal Classic, or Florescent, style construction in the area.

10.2 Composition of Yaxuná Monument 1

The face of the monument ([figure 8](#)) is quite eroded, and Brainerd's illustration (1958: figure B) shows only the better preserved basal portion of the image with the Waterlily Monster head. Examination of the monument in early morning light and under artificial lights brought out the upper portion of the image in its major features and these are given in the project rendering. The overall composition shows an individual dancing upon the head of the Waterlily Monster. His feet are facing to the viewers right and his torso is twisted around so that his upper body faces to the viewer's left. His right arm is raised in front of his face, and his left arm is extended over his chest.

Stylistically, this depiction shares with other monuments of the local area a relatively large head for the body, indeed, the whole upper body is out of proportion to the lower body.

In terms of composition, there is a small floating figure above the face, corresponding to the serpent footed figures floating on reliefs from X'telhu.

10.3 Regalia of Yaxuná Monument 1

The individual is wearing the "pineapple" helmet seen worn by individuals or floating above them as an emblem on panels from X'telhu. He has an apron on one thigh, like the flayed skin aprons worn by figures on X'telhu Panels C and D. He has two long, dangling loin cloth tassels in the front and rear. The importance of this element is emphasized by the fact that the rear tassels are brought around to the front for display. Long loincloth tassels are a characteristic of the local style, although usually there is only one tassel in front and in back. The individual

is carrying a baton or axe in his upraised right hand. This is not particularly diagnostic to the local style, but analogous implements are carried by figures on Popola Monuments 1 and 2. There is evidence that the figure wears the short shawl, a regular feature of regalia in the local style. Finally, there is a large head attached to the girdle of the individual. This frontally presented head can only be seen in outline, but that outline suggests a feline. Extending out from the girdle on the right side is a discernible trefoil element that might be a paw. A similar but less preserved element is on the left side of the girdle. Felines occur in the local style as whole skins draped over the backs of secondary figures on X'telhu Panels C and D. As discussed in sections above, they also occur wrapped around waists at Mulchic and at Chichén Itzá. Although certain salient diagnostics of the local regalia such as the broad girdle and banded cuffs are not found on Yaxuná Monument 1, there are sufficient correspondences to suggest that it is an expression of the local style found at other sites in the area.

10.4 The Waterlily Monster on Yaxuná Monument 1

The Waterlily Monster motif at the base of Yaxuná Monument 1 links this composition to X'telhu Panel A and to compositions found in the Lower Temple of the Jaguars at Chichén Itzá. The Yaxuná example is shown in profile. It has a large, undulating super orbital plate over a heavy-lidded round eye. The snout is divided into two sections, a snaggle-toothed bar and upper snout with profile nostrils. The upper snout terminates in a small bifurcate scroll. The Waterlily is shown in profile attached to the front of the super orbital plate. There is a small round ear-plug with two very long beads attached to it which end in an element similar to that ending the upper snout. The fish is shown in profile and had the head crests and front fin diagnostic of this image.

The combination of the monster, the waterlily, and the fish found on this monument compares best with examples in the basal registers of columns in the Lower Temple of the Jaguars at Chichén Itzá (e.g. Tozzer 1957: figure 345). However, the only iconographic element shared by these examples is the undulating super orbital plate. In another respect, the Chichén Itzá example compares better with the composition on X'telhu Panel A: the water lily is attached to a cord emanating from the eye of the monster rather than to the forehead. This compositional form also occurs on a lintel at the Puuc site of Sayil (Pollock 1980: figure 255a). However, in the X'telhu example the fish is absent. It would seem that we are dealing with variation on the compositional theme that links the expressions at Chichén Itzá, X'telhu, and Yaxuná in different ways. That it is a common theme is clear, and its presence at these three sites supports the hypothesis of iconographic interaction between them.

Finally, although the principal individual on X'telhu Panel A is in a static full frontal pose, it is clear that he is meant to be shown standing upon the Waterlily Monster as in the case of Yaxuná Monument 1. While there are double line cords

distinguishing the upper from lower registers under the feet of the flanking personages on this panel, there is no such division under the feet of the principal individual.

The Waterlily Monster is a central iconographic theme in Classic Maya art, associated with the world tree, the blood vision serpent, royal power, and sacrifice. The presence of this theme at Chichén Itzá and at Yaxuná and X'telhu is a significant indication that the inhabitants of these communities shared fundamental religious and political concepts.

10.5 The text on Monument 1

Like the reliefs from Mopila and Kancabdzonot, Yaxuná Monument 1 carried a brief hieroglyphic text. Unfortunately, all that is left of this text are the grooves surrounding the glyph blocks, the blocks themselves were either defaced or spalled off in later times. The text was located to the left of the figure and below his outstretched right arm.

Section 11 Yaxuná Monument 2

A second bas-relief at Yaxuná was discovered lying face up along the western edge of the Southeastern group. This monument was clearly out of context, and may have been originally set up in the Southeastern group. The carving is extremely shallow and follows the natural undulations of the stone. In addition to shallow carving, the execution of the image is very crude. These factors combine with erosion to produce very poor preservation of the image. The monument was discovered in the last days of work during 1986, and until it can be examined carefully under lights, it is not worth trying to provide a sketch illustration. The composition shows a profile figure facing to his right and dominating a small seated figure. The principal figure is carrying a knife in his upraised right hand and is cradling a spear in his left arm. This individual wore a polymorphic long-shouted mask helmet. There was a brief hieroglyphic text on this monument. Only the last glyph can be discerned, it reads *tj* (locative) *pop*, which might mean "on the mat", or "at the place of the mat". Despite the poor preservation, discovery of Yaxuná Monument 2. A second bas-relief at Yaxuná was (((discovered discovering)))??? additional bas-reliefs at this site, lying face up along the western edge of the Southeastern group. This monument was clearly out of context, and may have been originally set up in the Southeastern group. The carving is extremely shallow and follows the natural undulations of the stone. In addition to shallow carving, the execution of the image is very crude. These factors combine with erosion to produce very poor preservation of the image. The monument was discovered in the last days of work during 1986, and until it can be examined carefully under lights, it is not worth trying to provide a sketch illustration. The composition shows a profile figure facing to his right and

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Section 12 Summary Of Iconographic Data

The local style identified by Merle Greene Robertson (1986) at the sites of X'telhu and Popola has further examples from the sites of Mopila and Kancabdzonot. These sites are distributed to the north, east and south of Yaxuná. Two reliefs from Yaxuná, Monuments 1 and 2, show evidence of belonging to this local style. The monuments of this style are associated with Florescent or Terminal Classic style tenoned block masonry, and the known contexts are all range type structures with no evidence of corbel vaulted roofing.

Although the style is distinctive and the regalia associated with it is conventional and standardized, there are sufficient correspondences with regalia from Terminal Classic reliefs from the Puuc region and from Chichén Itzá to support the hypothesis that it is coeval with these artistic traditions and interactive with them.

The themes expressed in the local style, presentation of captives in processions, subordination of captives, seated lords in accession to power, principal individuals standing on the Waterlily Monster, are well within the range of interests expressed in the art of the Puuc region and in the art of Chichén Itzá. Although explicit scenes of battle and sacrifice have not yet been discovered in the local style, the conventional regalia is found elsewhere associated with such scenes. The domination of subordinate individuals is well represented and this is the outcome of warfare.

The identification of an individual acceding to the status of *Cah* raises some interesting possibilities. If indeed this is a variant of the *Cahal* title, then it indicates some correspondence in political institutions between the Yaxuná area and other parts of the lowlands. In the Western Rivers district of the southern lowlands, the *Cahal* title pertains to a political rank subordinate to *Ahau* but of central importance to the hierarchies within these kingdoms. At the Puuc site of Xcalumkin, the *Cahal* title is prominent and perhaps the highest political rank in the community. A correspondence in political institutions between the Puuc region and the Yaxuná area would make sense in light of the architectural and iconographic affinities discussed in sections above. Connections between the Puuc area and the Western Rivers district are possible but remain to be elucidated. The *Ahau* title is used at both Chichén Itzá and Uxmal (Kowalski,

1985 a and b). The fact that the Ahau title is used at these major capitals suggests some significant correspondences in political organization at the highest level. It remains to be seen if the *Cahal* title occurs at either of these major capitals and if this rank bears the same relationship to *Ahau* found in the southern lowlands. The textual evidence available to date is promising and challenges scholars to pursue the epigraphic perspective on Terminal Classic interaction in the northern lowlands.

Section 13 Preliminary Conclusions And Directions For Future Research

Survey during the 1986 season at Yaxuná indicates that the Terminal Classic construction activity was largely confined to selective modification of substantial existing buildings aimed at focusing the center on the terminus of *sacbe* 1 emanating from Cobá. An additional entirely new group was constructed at the site focusing on what surface patterns suggests is a ballcourt. In addition to these public buildings, the survey discovered remains of range type structures on raised substructures which appear to be Terminal Classic period elite residences. The two such buildings examined by the project are situated to the north of the North Group.

The resulting design of the Terminal Classic center bears affinities with the northern sector of the center at Chichén Itzá and with the vicinity of the terminus of *sacbe* 1 at Cobá. Like Chichén Itzá, the center at Yaxuná has a number of small public platforms distributed in the open plaza space between the major building complexes. Also like Chichén Itzá, Yaxuná has a massive central pyramid. Structure 5F-3, which is only six meters shorter than the Castillo. Finally, both Chichén Itzá and Yaxuná have ballcourts as a major focus of their centers. *Sacbe* 1 terminates at Cobá in a plaza area flanked to the north by the Nohoch Mul pyramid, the most massive pyramid at that site, and flanked to the south by the group containing the ballcourt.

The iconography of reliefs associated with the ballcourt at Chichén Itzá in the Lower Temple of the Jaguars focuses on armed or tribute bearing individuals. The reliefs associated with the ballcourt at Cobá depict captives and principal individuals dominating subordinate individuals. Here, as in the Classic period southern low-lands, the ballgame is associated with war and sacrifice (Miller and Houston, n.d.; Freidel and Schele, n.d.). There may be a connection with the ballgame in the reliefs at Popola, for the seated subordinate individuals on both Monuments 1 and 2 wear rectangular bars across their middles which might be yokes. Yaxuná Monument 1, associated with the ballcourt group, corresponds to iconography in the Lower Temple of the Jaguars in its use of the Waterlily Monster. Ballcourts in the northern lowlands are rare (Robertson, Kurjack and Maldonado, n.d.), there are only two at Cobá and one at Uxmal. There is an extraordinary number of courts at Chichén Itzá (13). If the surface indications of a

Terminal Classic ballcourt at Yaxuná are born out by future research, it will support the hypothesized central importance of this site in the interaction between the major capitals on the peninsula.

Future seasons at Yaxuná will complete the contour map of the site and inventory surface architecture for evidence of Terminal Classic occupation. The two major possibilities for this occupation are that it is substantial and enduring or that it is brief and ephemeral. In the former case, it will form the basis for further hypotheses to the effect that Yaxuná was a strategic border town between the Western and Eastern Spheres of the Terminal Classic lowlands prior to the rise of Chichén Itzá, and a major boundary marker for a Large-Scale state innovated by Cobá out of local lowland political antecedents. In the latter case, it will form the basis for hypotheses to the effect that Yaxuná was deliberately established as a polity representing the major states on the peninsula in their confrontation with Chichén Itzá for dominion in the northern lowlands.

Preliminary work in the vicinity of Yaxuná by the project and other scholars shows a pattern of small Terminal Classic satellite sites surrounding this larger site at distances between 6 and 15 kms. The iconography of reliefs at these sites suggests that they spatially define an integrated local area with its capital at Yaxuná. This iconography is interactive with the Puuc area and with Chichén Itzá, both in terms of elements and in terms of themes. The discovery of an accession statement to the title of *Cahal* points to the prospect of an integrated political hierarchy in this local area. The hypothesis that the appropriate superior rank, *Ahau*, ruled at Yaxuná is supported by the fact that the major contending Terminal Classic states all employ the *Ahau* title. Confirmation of this hypothesis must come from future epigraphic discoveries at Yaxuná itself. The fact that both of the Terminal Classic reliefs so far found at the site contained hieroglyphic texts, albeit unreadable, is encouraging. Whether or not the internal political structure of a polity centered on Yaxuná can be identified, the prospects are "very good for further interpretation of the relationships between Yaxuná, Chichén Itzá, Cobá and the Puuc sites through iconographic data.

The project will continue to investigate these satellite sites by carrying out theodolite survey at the known sites and by carrying out reconnaissance aimed at the discovery of new sites. One known satellite site is situated on *sacbe* 1 about 4 km. east of the center, this site will be mapped in the Spring of 1987 by R. Cobos and T. Gallareta with students from the University of Yucatan.

In the long-term, excavation at Yaxuná and at sites in the vicinity will become necessary in order to acquire more substantive information on the dating of surface architecture and on its formal design. Such excavations will also prove necessary to gain access to the other primary data categories, particularly ceramics, with which to test hypotheses concerning the status of Yaxuná in the dynamics of the Terminal Classic period in the northern lowlands.

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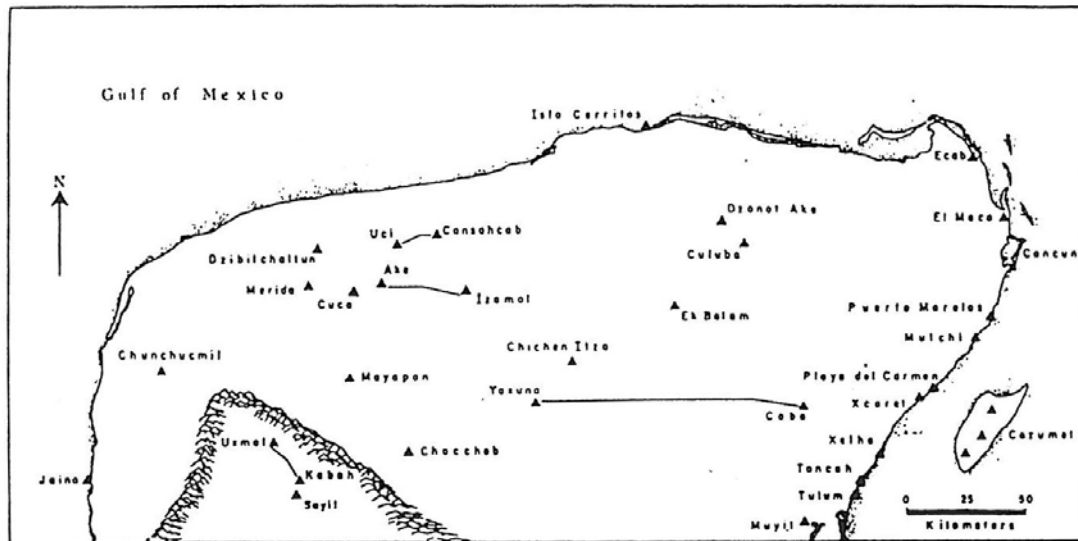


Figure 1. Map of northern Yucatan showing sites discussed in text.

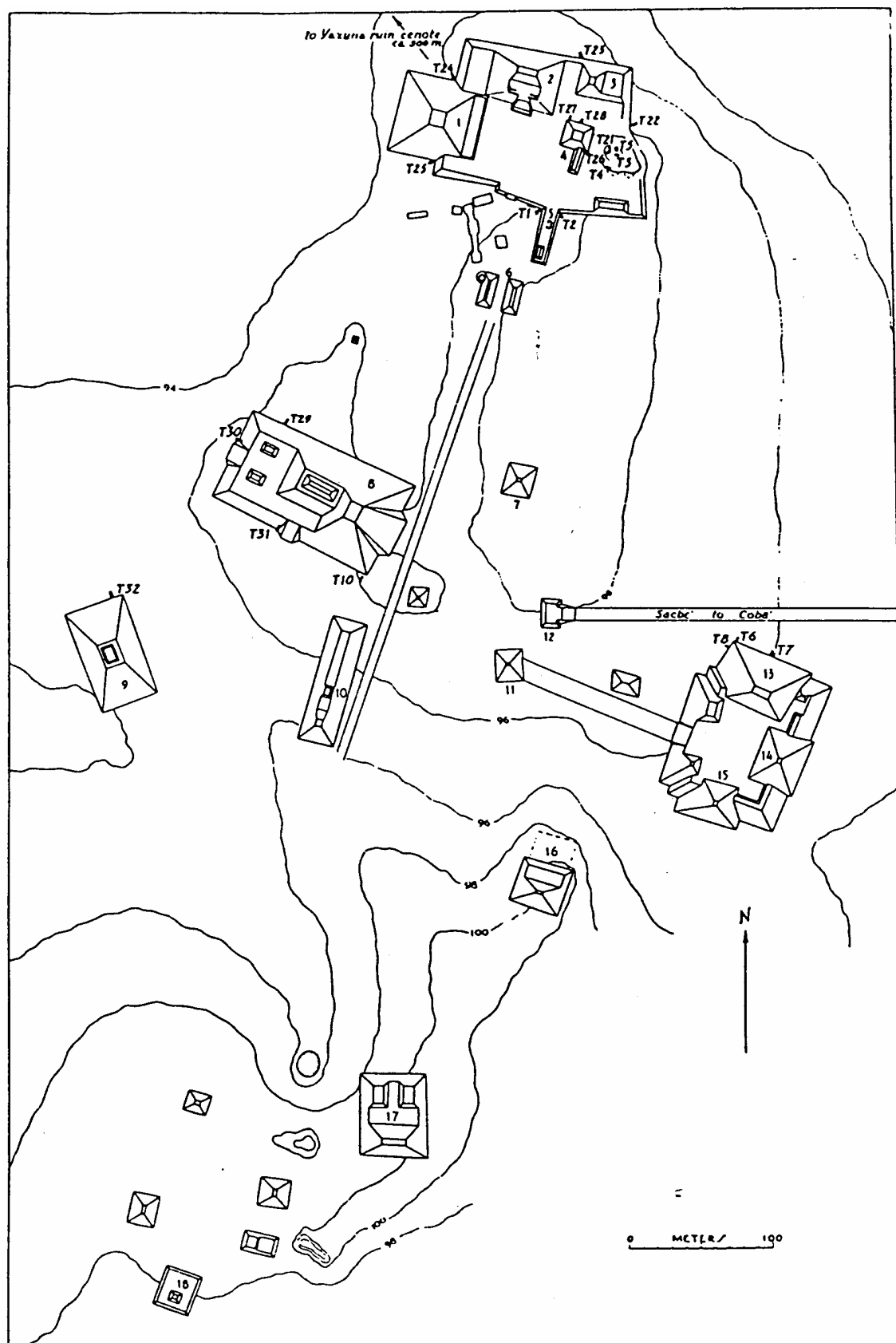


Figure 2: Carnegie Institution Maler Convention map of Yaxuna, from Brainerd, 1958.

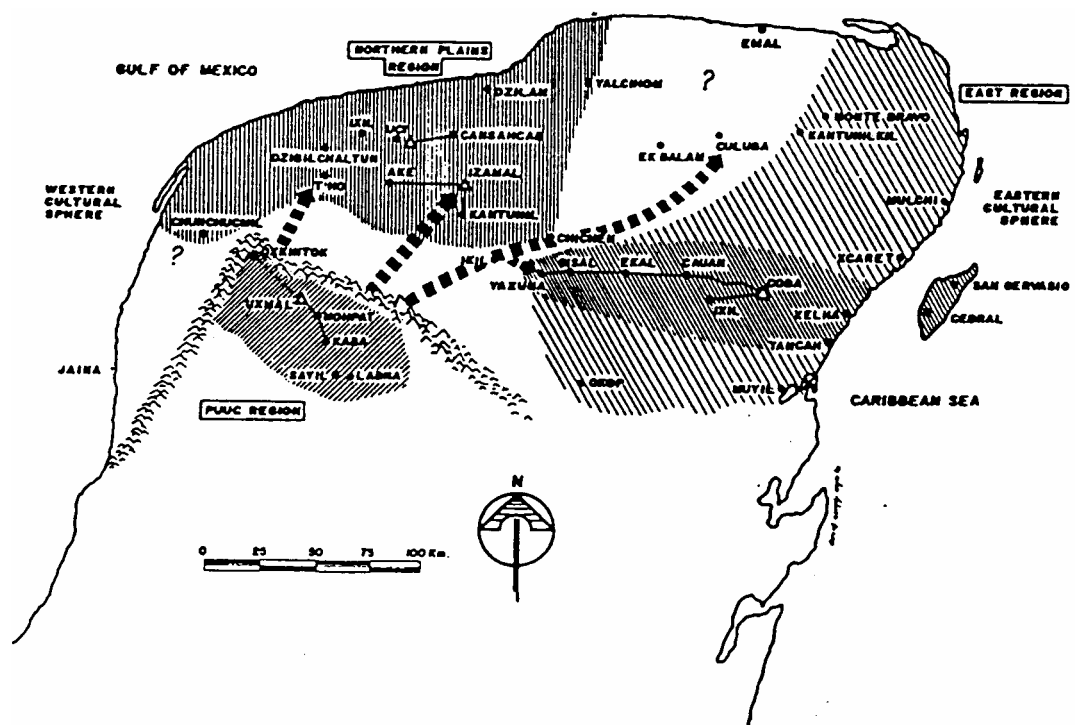


Figure 3: Map of Terminal Classic northern lowland cultural spheres, from Robles C. and Andrews 1986.

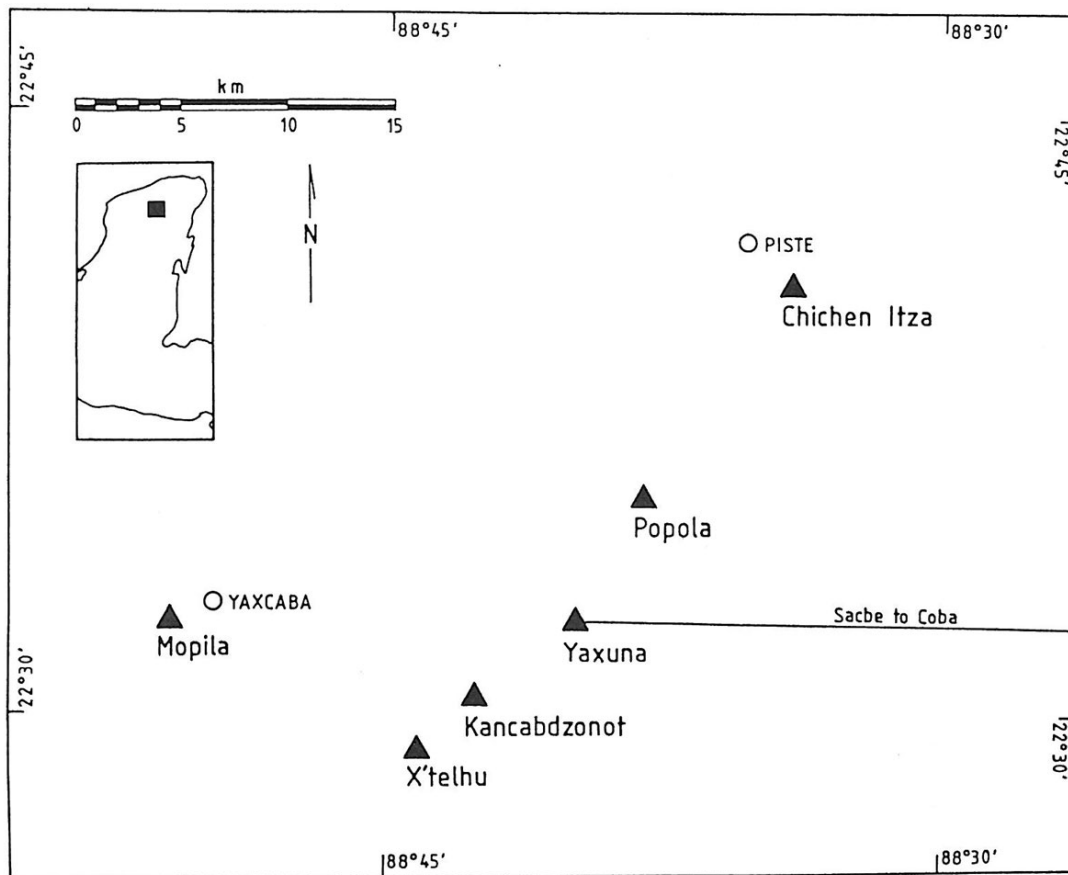


Figure 4. Map of local sites surrounding Yaxuna.

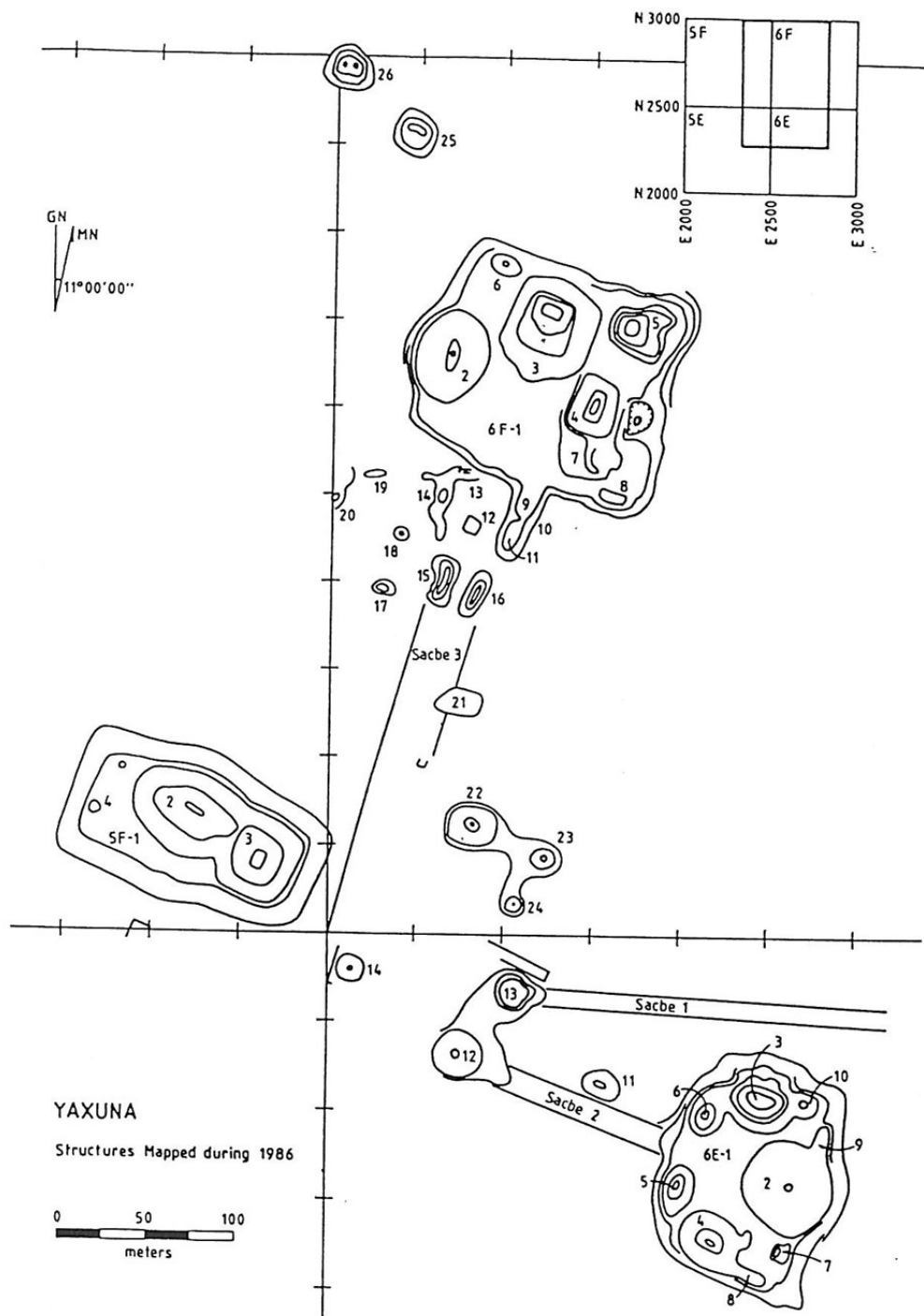


Figure 5. The SMU-NGS-INAH project contour map of Yaxuna as of 1986

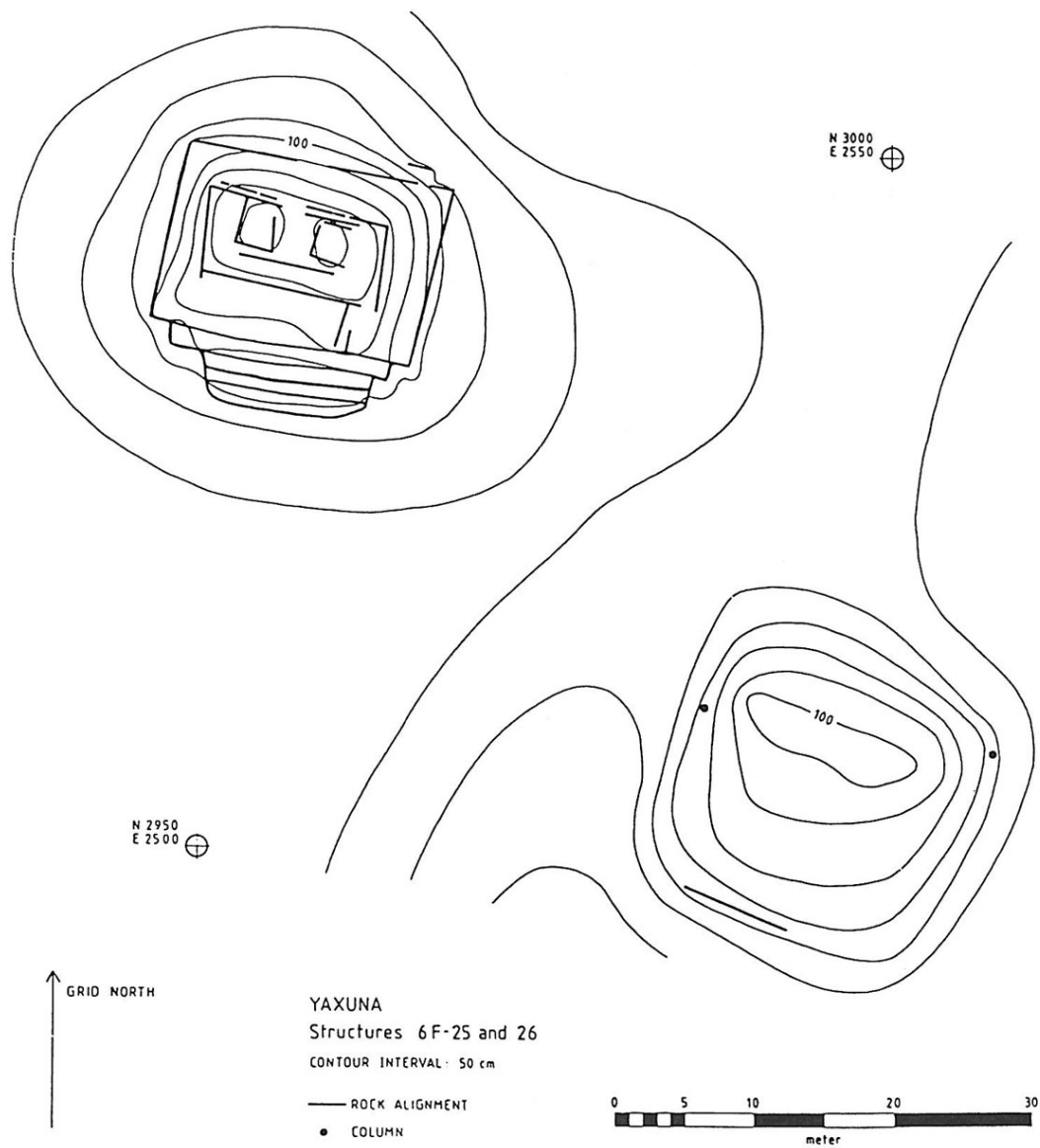


Figure 5a.

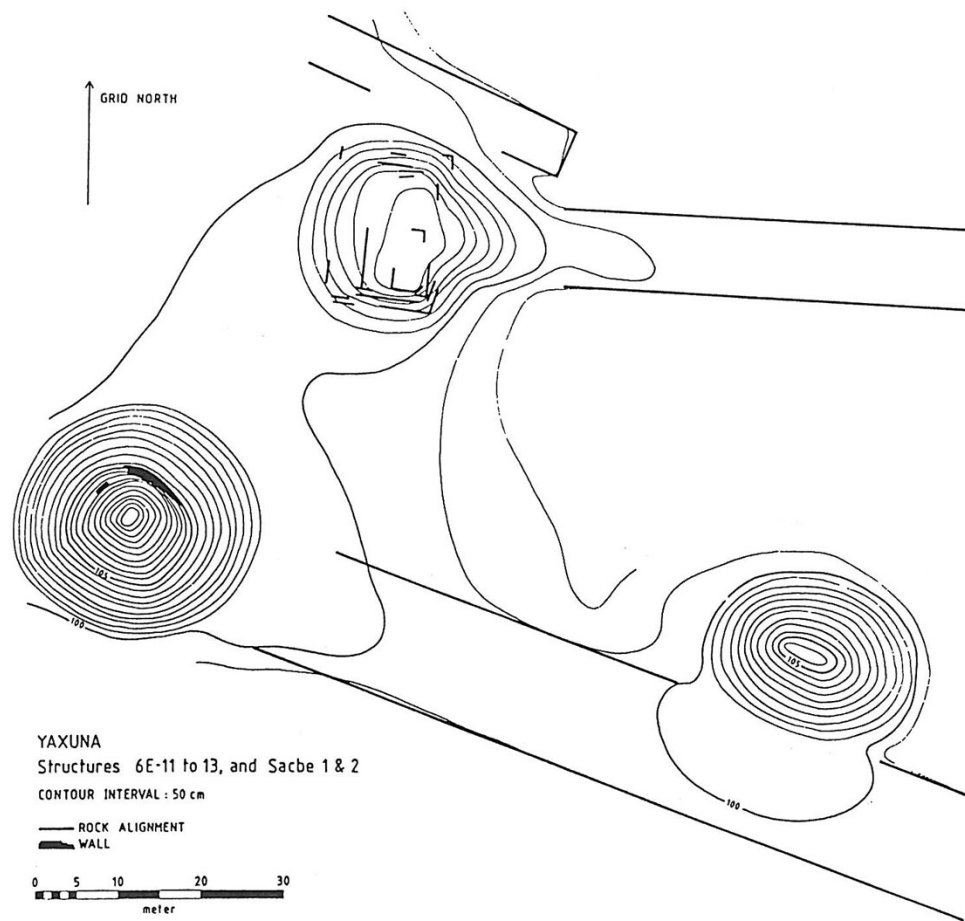


Figure 5b.

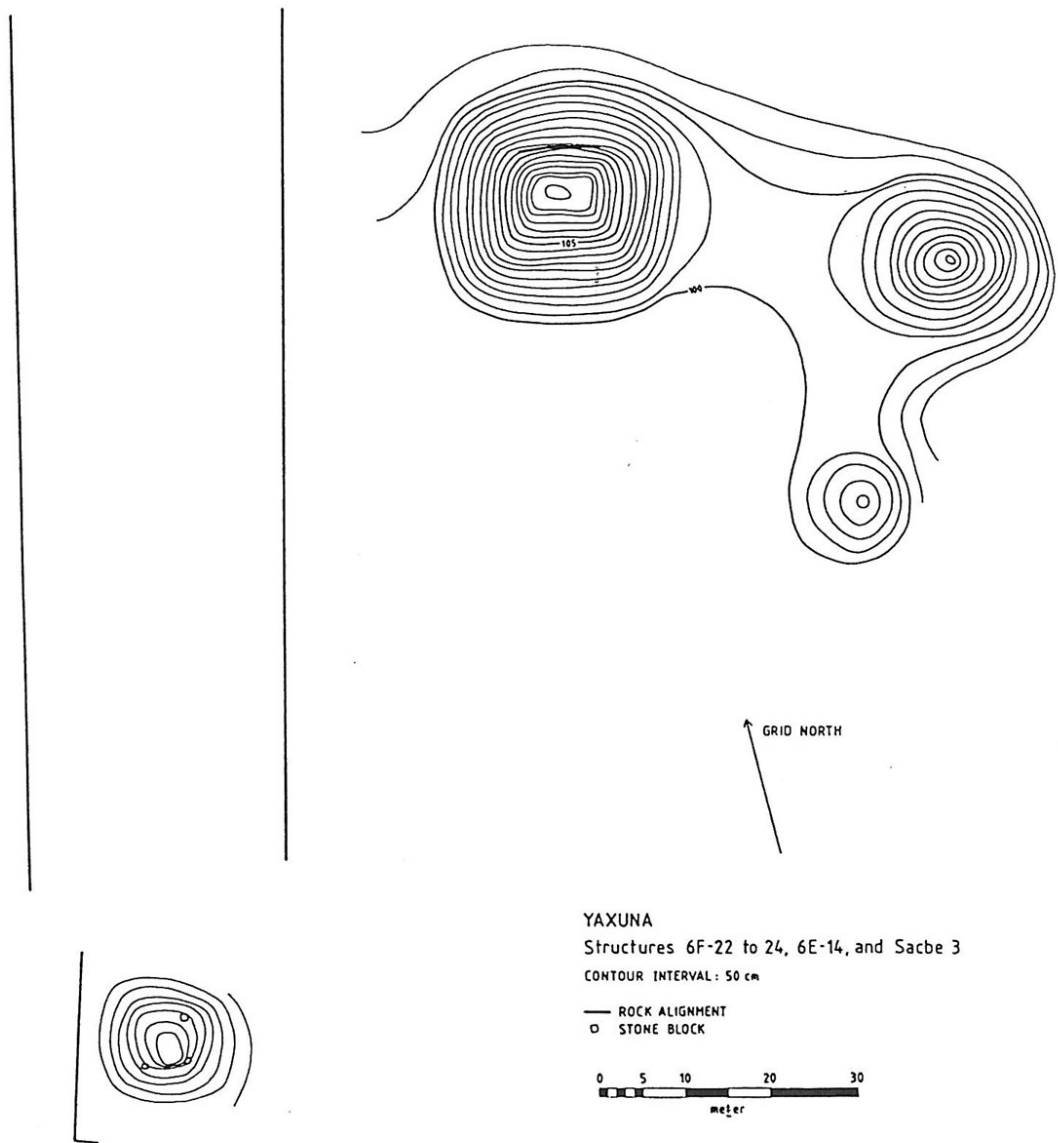


Figure 5c.



Figure 6a: Photograph of Structure 6F-9, showing boot-shaped vault stones and false soffit along the end wall.



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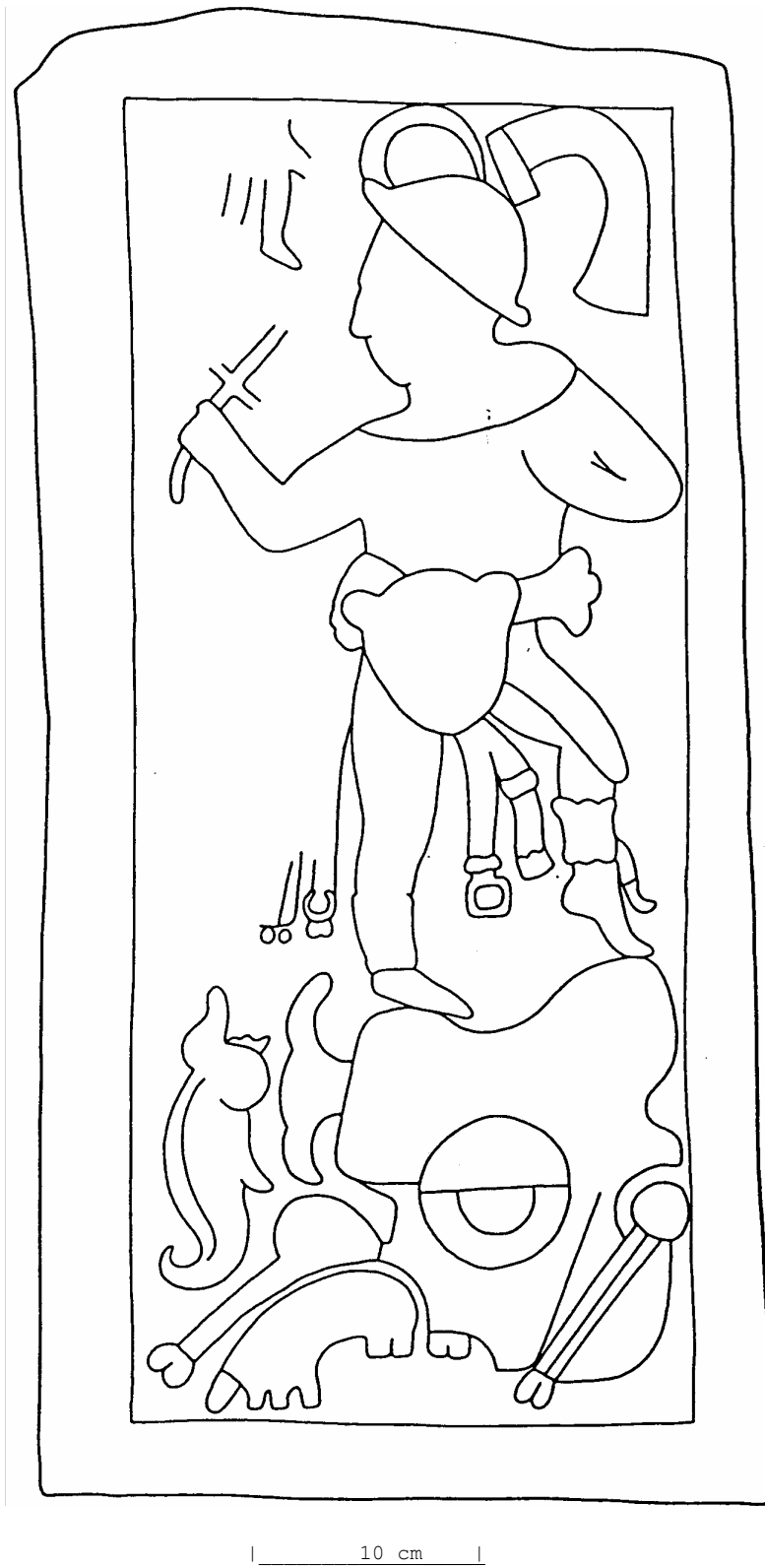
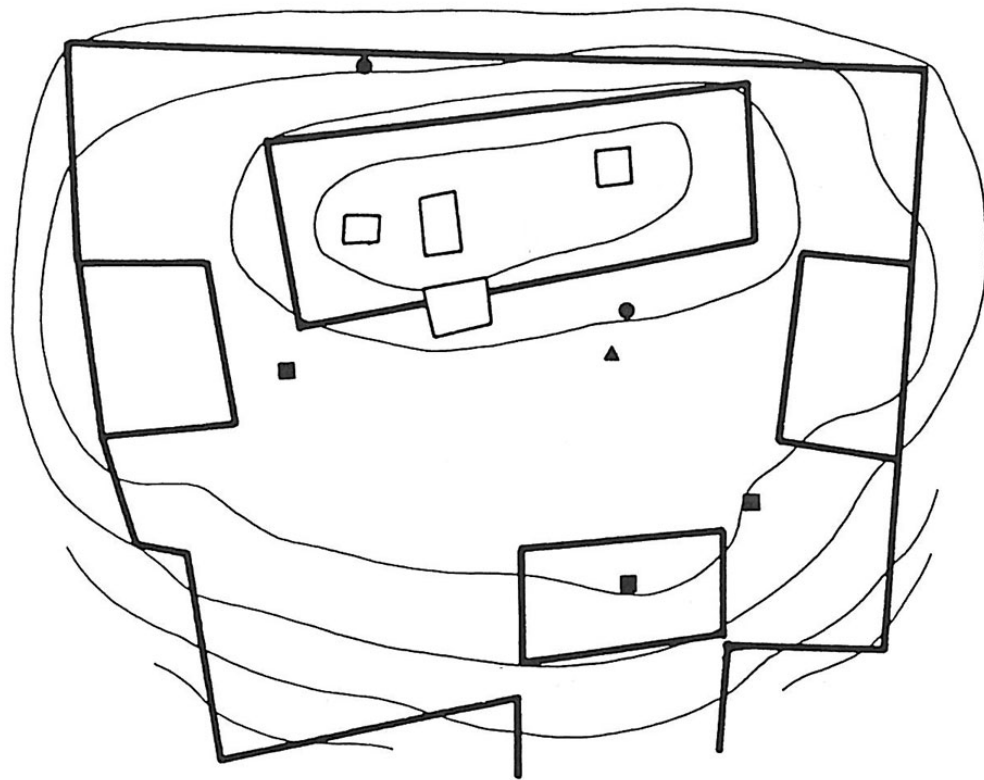


Figure 8: Monument 1, Yaxuna. rendering by Karim Sadr after field drawings by David Freidel.



POPOLA
CONTOUR INTERVAL: 50 cm

- LOOT HOLE
- ▲ SCULPTURE
- STELA
- RELIEF

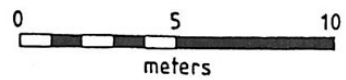


Figure 9: Preliminary contour map of Group 1, Popola, plotted and rendered by Karim Sadr, based upon project survey.

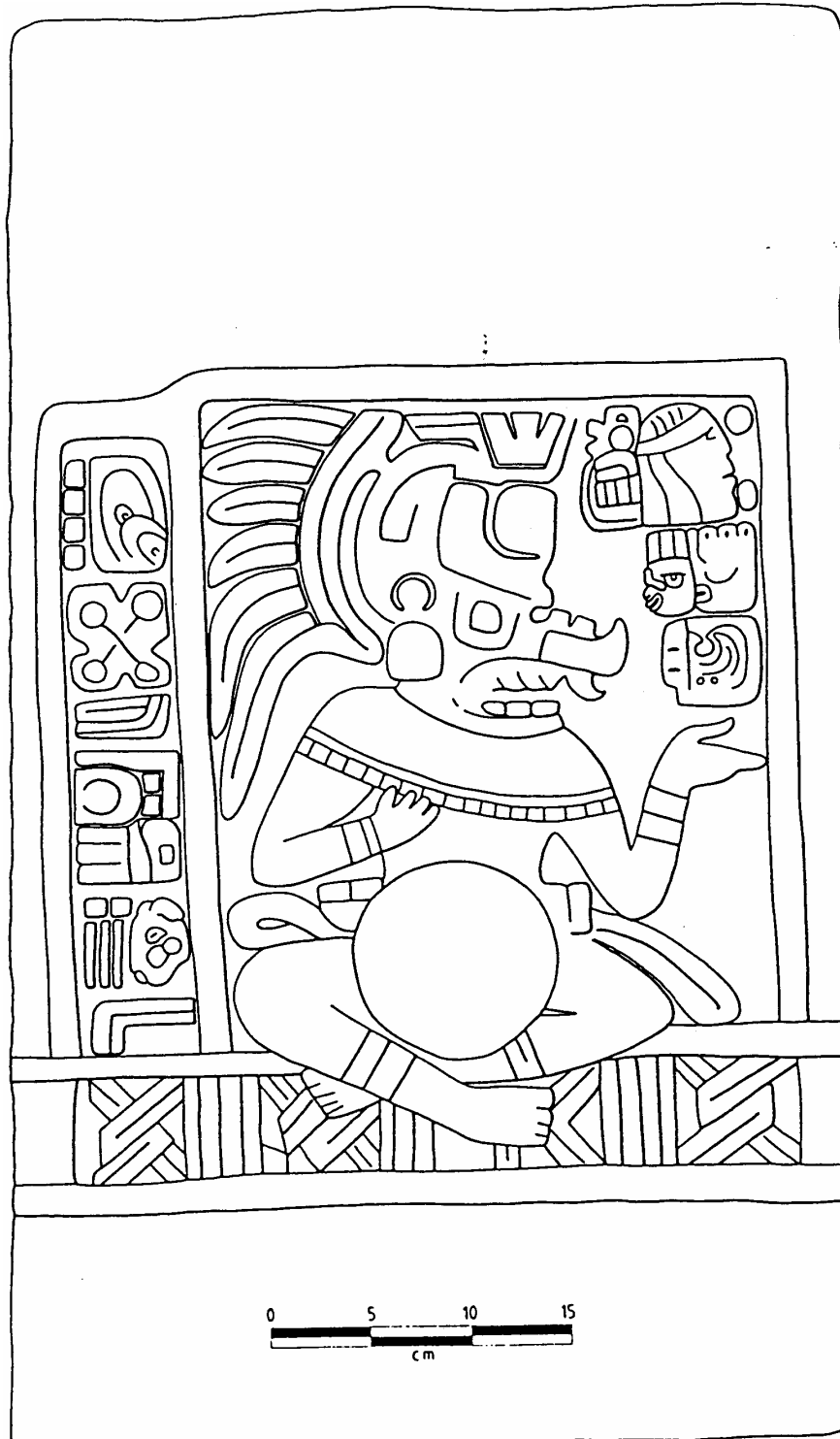


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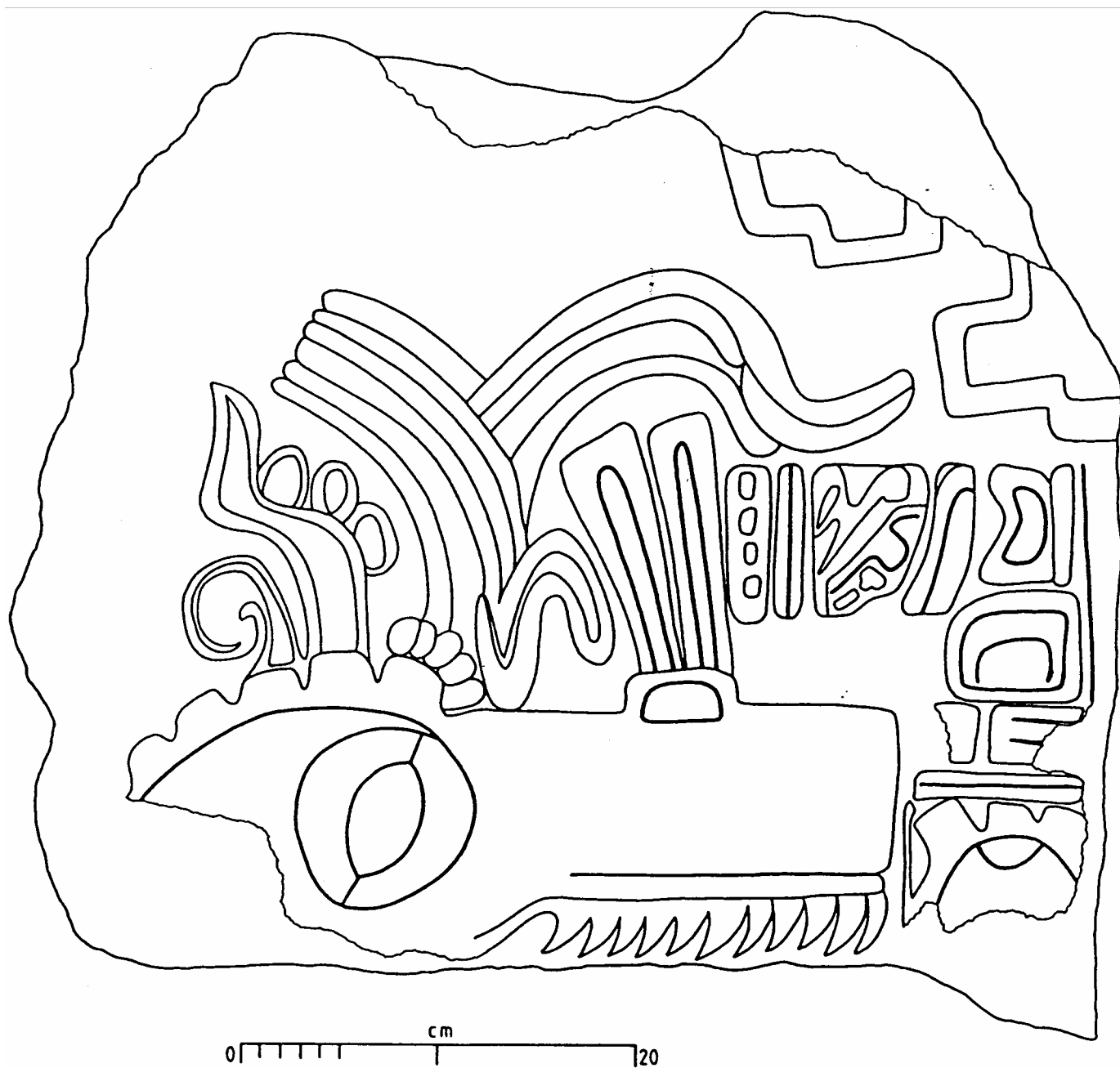


Figure 11: Monument 1. Kancabdzonot, rendering by Karim Sadr after field drawings by David Freidel.

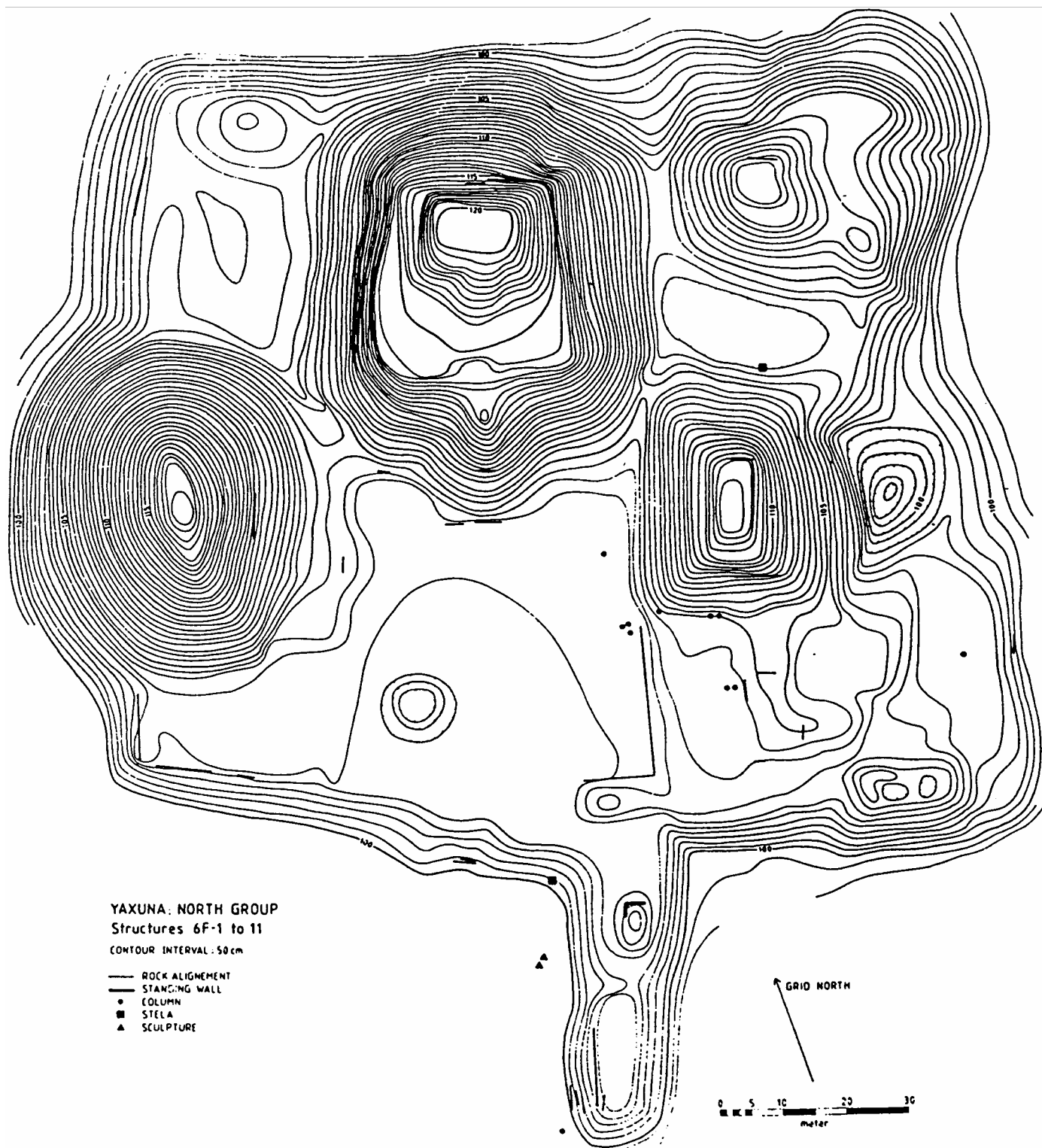


Figure 12: The Northern Group at Yaxuna, map plotted and rendered by Karim Sadr, after project field survey.

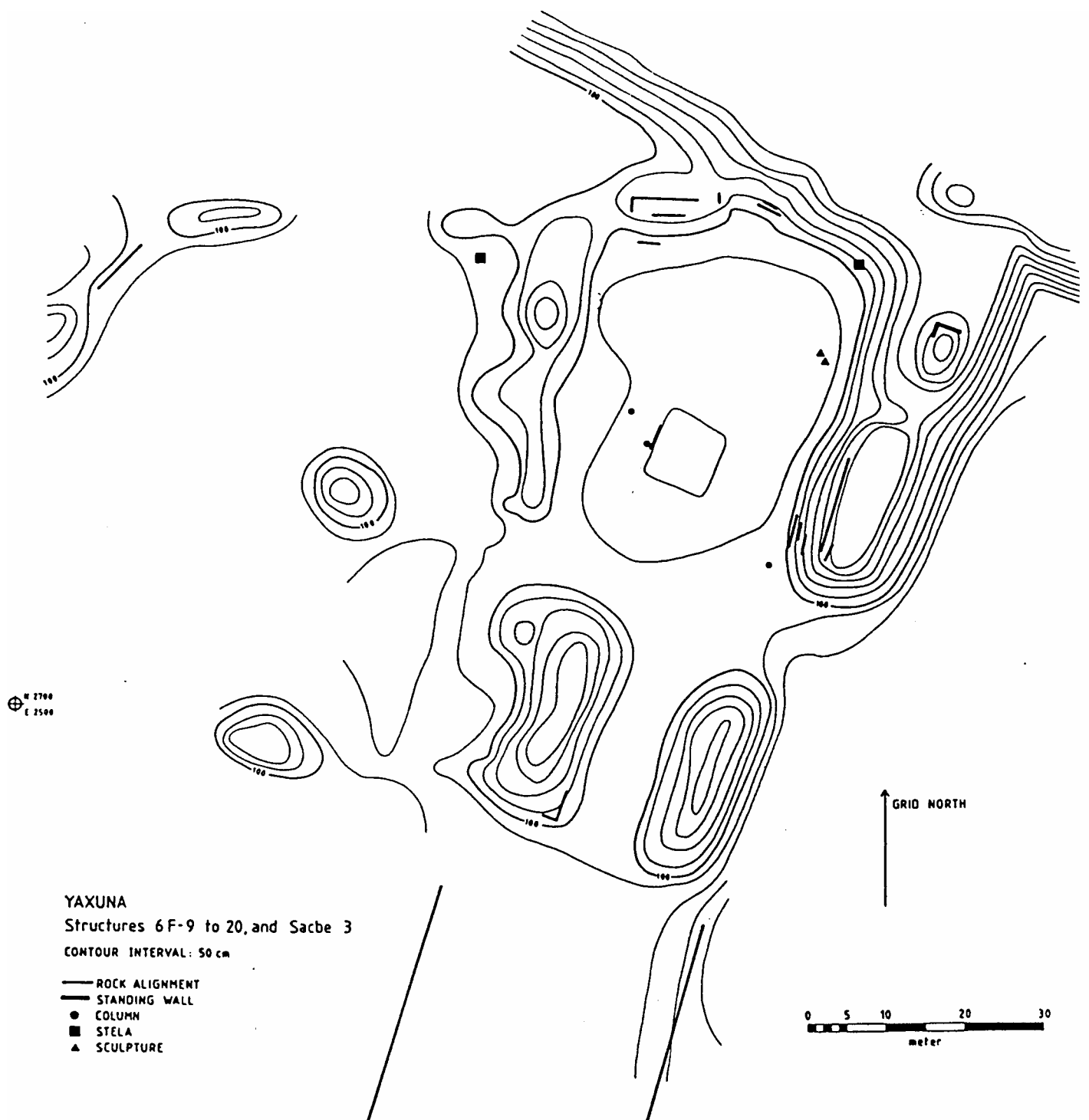


Figure 13: The ballcourt group at Yaxuna, map plotted and rendered by Karim Sadr, after project field survey.



Figure 14. The Southeastern Group at Yaxuna, map plotted and rendered by Karim Sadr, after project field survey.

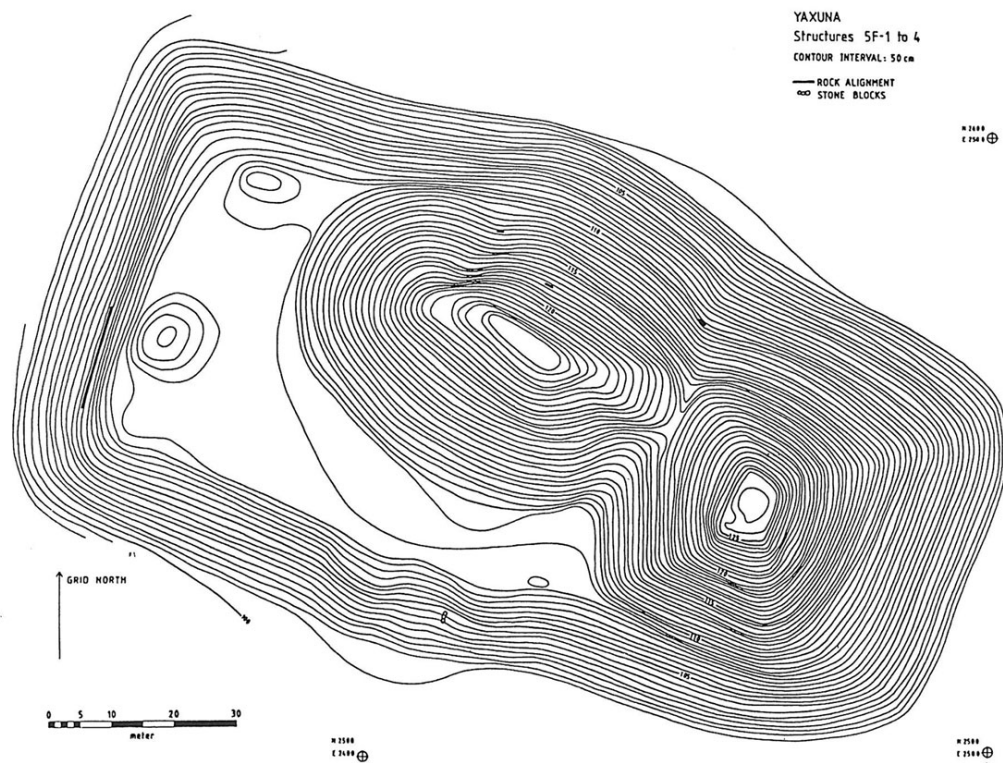


Figure 15. Structure F1-5 at Yaxuna, map plotted and rendered by Karim Sadr, after project field survey.

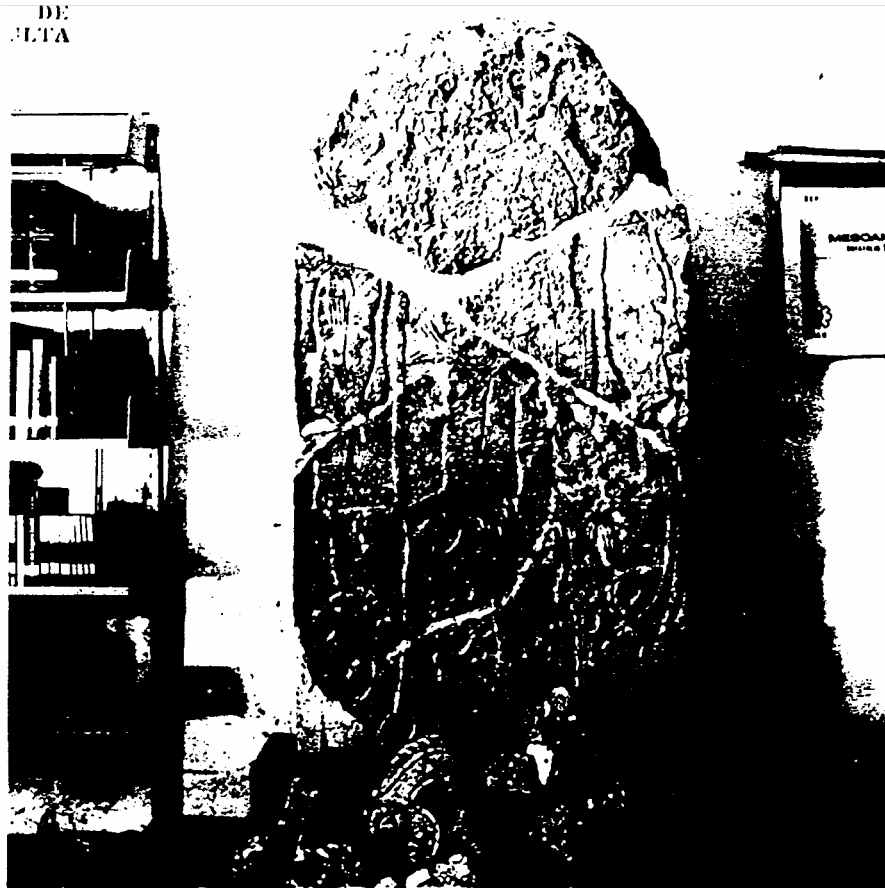


Figure 16: Photograph by Jeanne Randall of X'telhu Panel A.



Figure 17: Photograph by Jeanne Randall of X'telhu Panel B.



Figure 18: Photograph by Jeanne Randall of X'telhu Panels C and D.

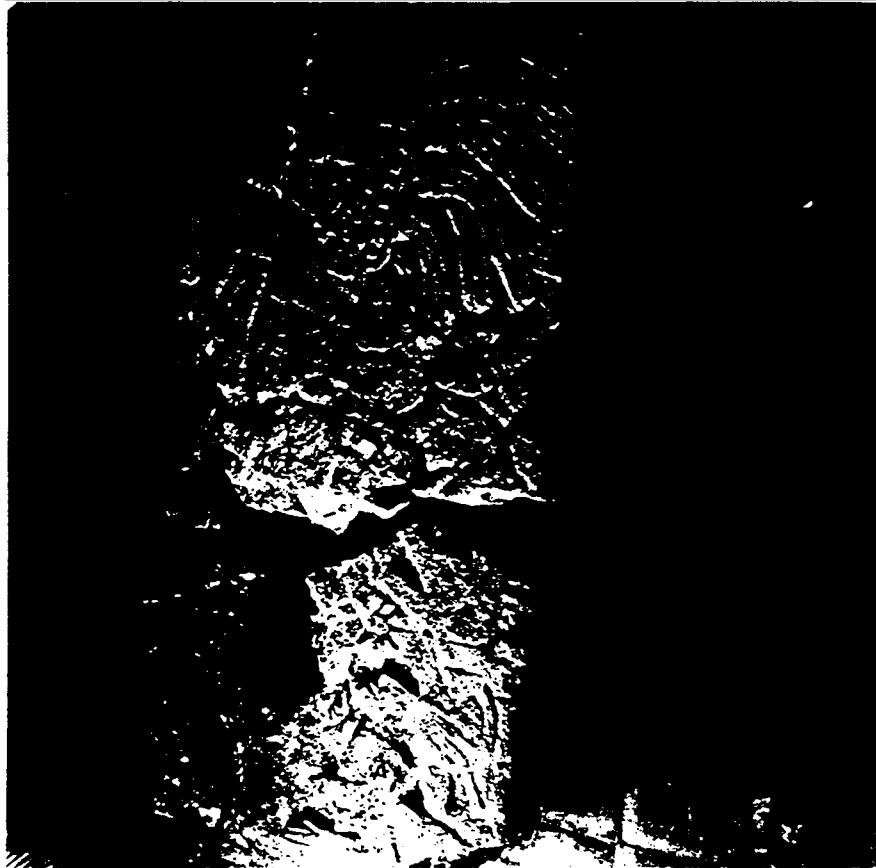


Figure 19: Photograph by Jeanne Randall of Popola Monument 1.



Figure 20: Photograph by Jeanne Randall of Popola Monument 2.



Figure 21: Photograph by Jeanne Randall of Popola Monument 3.

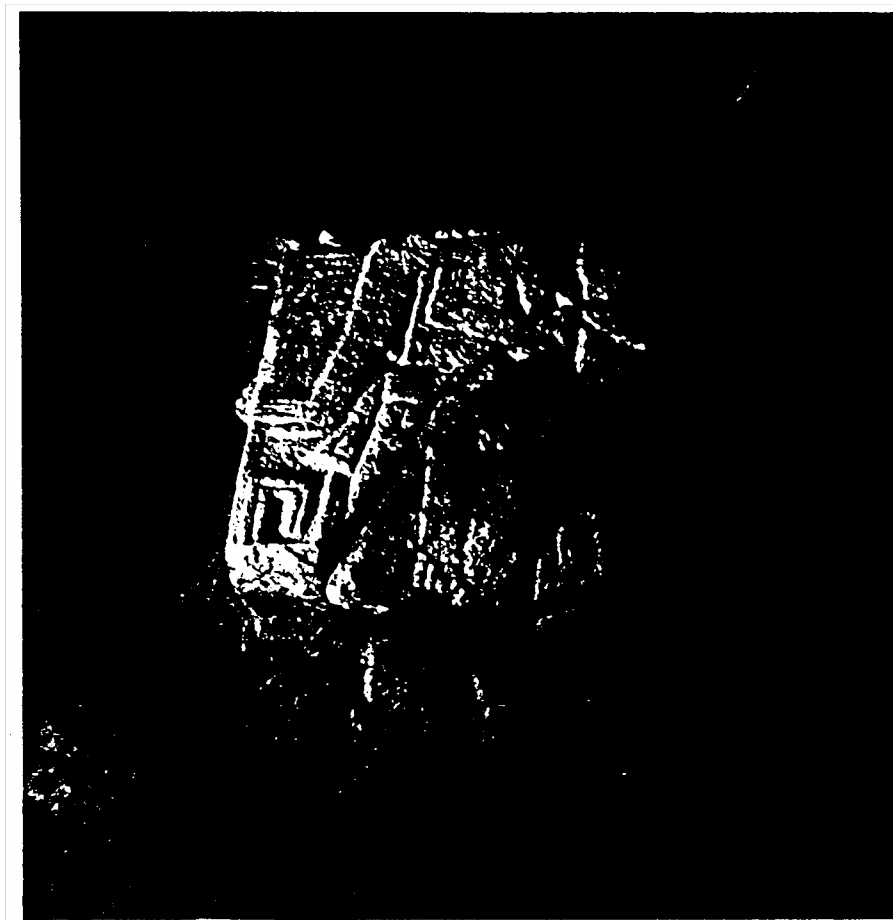


Figure 22: Photograph by Jeanne Randall of Popola Monument 4.

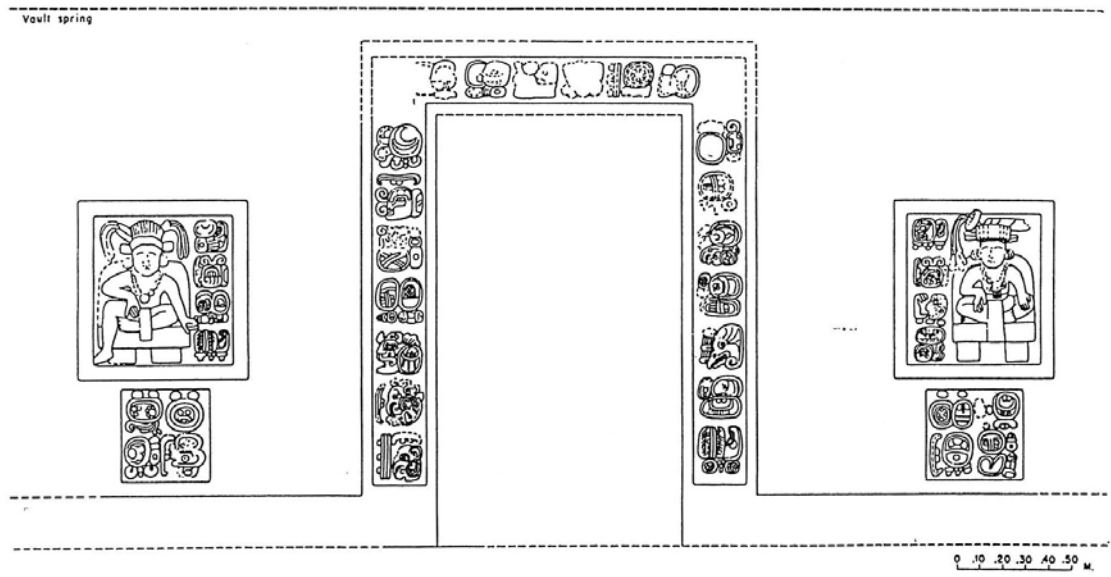


Figure 23. Rendering of the Southern Structure of the Hieroglyphic Group, Xcalumkin, from Pollock 1980.

TABLE 1

COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGICAL CHART FOR THE NORTHERN MAYA LOWLANDS

CHRONOLOGICAL CALENDAR	NORTHERN MAYA LOWLANDS CULTURE PERIODS	DZIBILCHALTUN CERAMIC COMPLEXES	G. W. BRAINERD CERAMIC STAGES (1958)	R. E. SMITH CERAMIC COMPLEXES (1971)	TIKAL	PALENQUE	MAYA LONG COUNT
1400	COLONIAL		COLONIAL	CHAUACA			12.0.0.0.0
1500				CHIKINCHEL			11.15.0.0.0
1400	DECADENT (LATE POSTCLASSIC)	CHECHEM	LATE (NATAPAR)	TASITZ			11.10.0.0.0
1300			MEXICAN MIDDLE	HOCABA			11.5.0.0.0
1200							11.0.0.0.0
1100	MODIFIED FLORESCENT (EARLY POSTCLASSIC)	2 ZIPCHE 1	EARLY (TOLTEC CHICHER)	BOTUTA	?	?	10.15.0.0.0
1000					CABAN		10.10.0.0.0
900	PURE FLORESCENT (TERMINAL CLASSIC)	2 COPO	(PUC)	CEHPECH		POST- BALUNTE	10.5.0.0.0
800		1	FLORESCENT		EZNAB		10.0.0.0.0
700	EARLY PERIOD II (LATE CLASSIC)		(CHERES)	(TEPEU 2) MOTUL (TEPEU 1)	IMX	BALUNTE MURCIELAGOS	9.15.0.0.0
600					IK	OTOLUM	9.10.0.0.0
500	EARLY PERIOD I (EARLY CLASSIC)	PIIM	REGIONAL	COCHUAH (TLAKOL)		MOTIEPA	9.5.0.0.0
400					MANIK		9.0.0.0.0
300							8.15.0.0.0
200		2 XCULUL		?	CTMI	PILOTA	8.10.0.0.0
100	LATE FORMATIVE	1	FORMATIVE		CAUAC	PRE-PILOTA	
0						?	
100		KOMCHEN		TIHOBUO (CHICAREL)	CHUEN		
200							
300		2			TZEC		
400	MIDDLE FORMATIVE	NABANCHÉ					
500					EB		
600							
700		1					
800							

NOTE: This chart follows a correlation of Maya and Christian calendars at 11.16.0.0.0.

TABLE 2
CARNEGIE •SMU STRUCTURE CONCORDANCE

<u>BRAINERD 1958</u>	<u>SMU-NGS-INAH SURVEY</u>
STRUCTURE 1	STRUCTURE 6F-2
STRUCTURE 2	STRUCTURE 6F-3
STRUCTURE 3	STRUCTURE 6F-5
STRUCTURE 4	STRUCTURE 6F-4
STRUCTURE 5	STRUCTURE 6F-9
STRUCTURE 6	STRUCTURES 6F-15, 16
STRUCTURE 7	STRUCTURE 6F-22
STRUCTURE 9	STRUCTURE 5F-1 (STRUCTURES 5F-2, 2, 4)
STRUCTURE 9	NOT SURVEYED, STRUCTURE 5E-1
STRUCTURE 10	NOT SURVEYED. STRUCTURE 5E-2
STRUCTURE 11	STRUCTURE 6E-12
STRUCTURE 12	STRUCTURE 6E-13
STRUCTURE 13	STRUCTURE 6E-3
STRUCTURE 14	STRUCTURE 6E-2
STRUCTURE 15	STRUCTURE 6E-4
STRUCTURE 16	NOT SURVEYED, STRUCTURE 6E-15
STRUCTURE 17	NOT SURVEYED, STRUCTURE 5E-3
STRUCTURE 18	NOT SURVEYED, STRUCTURE 5E-8